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COLLECTED ESSAYS AND REVIEWS

**BY
WILLIAM JAMES**



**LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
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PREFACE

THIS volume brings together for the convenience of students thirty-nine scattered articles and reviews by William James. None of these has heretofore appeared in book form, and many have been lost sight of and forgotten. The present volume when added to those already published will render easily accessible nearly all of the author's significant writings. The few exceptions will be noted presently.

In presenting this book to the public the editor is fully aware that he will meet with criticism from two opposite angles, on the one hand from those who disbelieve in posthumous publications altogether, and on the other hand from those who would reprint every work of the author's pen whose authenticity can be established.

The justification of publishing such a book at all lies in the interest and convenience of the wide circle of James's students and of the still wider circle of those who delight in reading him. The forthcoming *Annotated Bibliography of the Writings of William James* (1920) contains approximately three hundred titles, exclusive of translations and posthumous publications. Of these only nine are the titles of books, and of these nine books, only three (*Human Immortality*, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and *Psychology: Briefer Course*) had not

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been in whole or part previously published in periodicals. For over forty years from 1868 up to within a few months of his death in 1910, James wrote essays, articles, reviews, and letters almost continuously. Nor were these hastily written and subsequently revised. It was the author's habit to write well and finally when he did write; and then when he had something more to say, to write again. In other words there is a finished quality, both of style and of thought, in most of his periodical writings. While many of these writings have already been collected, some by James himself, others since his death, these represent only a fraction of the whole. Among the periodical writings omitted from previous volumes are many which are of great value for the light which they throw upon James's own development and his relations with his contemporaries, as well as for their philosophical and psychological content. Scattered through various periodicals they can only with difficulty be consulted by the student, and are entirely inaccessible to the average reader. In addition to these the present volume contains a number of reviews which were originally published unsigned, and whose authorship has not heretofore been announced.

There are undoubtedly many devotees of James who will regret that James's scattered writings have not *all* been reprinted. As a matter of fact, many of the reviews contain little else than expository matter, many of the articles have been in substance restated elsewhere, and many of the letters

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and shorter writings are of such a nature as to be more suitable to a biography. Some of this last group are quoted or cited in the forthcoming *Letters of William James*. The editor is further reconciled to the omission of these three groups of writings by the fact that the *Annotated Bibliography* will serve to make them known and will enable a sufficiently eager reader to find them.

There is one group of articles that has presented a peculiar problem, which has not been solved without misgivings. The three articles, "Are We Automata?" *Mind*, 1879, "The Spacial Quale," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 1879, and "On Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology," *Mind*, 1884, are all psychological classics. Each deals with one of James's most original and important contributions to the subject. None of these was reprinted as a whole in the *Principles of Psychology*, and they have great historical interest as they stand. Nevertheless there is no important difference between the content of these articles and that of those chapters of the *Principles* which deal with the same topics. Furthermore the preparation of the *Annotated Bibliography* has afforded the editor an opportunity of calling attention to them and of relating them to James's other writings. Hence, in view of their great length, it has been deemed best to omit them from the present volume. But at the same time several other articles of the same type have been included: "Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence" because of its unique historical

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importance, as perhaps the key to all of James's later thought; "The Sentiment of Rationality" because of the light which it throws on James's philosophical sources; "The Feeling of Effort" because of its extreme inaccessibility in its present form; "What is an Emotion?" because, being written before the publication of Lange's work on the same subject, it throws important light on the question of priority respecting the famous "James-Lange theory."

It would in some respects have been more satisfactory if the papers contained in the present volume had been arranged in accordance with their subject-matter, or grouped under the headings "Philosophy," "Psychology," and "Psychical Research." But such a classification would have been entirely artificial and would have obscured the unity of the author's thought. Such papers as "Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence" or "The Sentiment of Rationality" are equally philosophical and psychological; at any rate, to group them as the one or the other would have been to put a certain construction on them instead of letting them speak for themselves. The chronological arrangement which has been adopted is convenient and colorless, and has the additional advantage of indicating the sequence of the author's intellectual development.

In the preparation of this volume I have consulted many of James's friends, and while I am alone responsible for the ultimate selection, I have been guided so far as possible by the judgment of

PREFACE

those who were best qualified both by their interest in James and by their familiarity with the subject-matter of his writings. It gives me pleasure to acknowledge the help of Dr. E. B. Holt, Dr. R. M. Yerkes, Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, Judge T. M. Shackelford, Professor E. B. Titchener, Professor D. S. Miller, Dr. James R. Angell, Dr. H. M. Kallen, and Dr. Benjamin Rand. My colleagues, Professor H. S. Langfeld and Professor W. B. Cannon, have been especially generous of their time, and on certain technical matters beyond my competence their assistance has been invaluable. Finally, the undertaking would have been entirely impossible without the continuous encouragement and co-operation of Mr. Henry James.

The recent reading and re-reading of all of James's known writings have impressed two things very deeply on my mind. First, there was one and only one James from the beginning to the end. With all of his versatility and openmindedness he remained unconsciously loyal to certain fundamental convictions. It is even permissible to say that there is one germinal idea from which his whole thought grew, provided we do not overlook the even more important fact that his thought *did grow*. This germinal idea is the idea of the essentially active and interested character of the human mind. Second, I have been impressed as never before by James's extraordinary intellectual chivalry and hospitality, the reflection of his peculiar social genius. He was a man quick to reach to the heart

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of another man, quick to praise, quick to esteem the gifts of others, even when, as sometimes happened, no one else esteemed them at all. This gratitude which James felt so genuinely and manifested with so much kindness was not infrequently the foundation in others of their sustaining self-respect. Beginning with the older generation of his father and teachers, and ending with the younger generation of his children and students, his life was a continuous succession of marvellous human discoveries. As it was with his personal intercourse, so it was in his relations with those whom he knew more remotely or only through their writings. Most of these discoveries he has published to the world, in his prefaces and citations, or in those remarkable memorial addresses which have been reprinted in the *Memories and Studies* and which few men have known so well how to write.

When, as in this volume, we view James's thought throughout its entire length, we find him moving steadily abreast of his time and welcoming new ideas with eagerness and relish down to the day of his death. But despite this fact he was somehow never swept off his feet. He was never fickle or vacillating, nor did his thought ever lose its highly personal and characteristic flavor. There are few intellectual histories in which quick enthusiasm and love of novelty are so perfectly balanced by steadiness and discipline.

RALPH BARTON PERRY.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
May 24, 1920.

I

SARGENT'S "PLANCHETTE"¹

[1869]

.

A READER of scientific habits of thought would have been more interested by a very few cases described by the author over his own signature, and with every possible detail given, in which pedantically minute precautions had been taken against illusion of the senses or deceit. Of course it is quite natural that people who are comfortably in possession of a season-ticket over the Stygian ferry, and daily enjoying the privileges it confers of correspondence with the "summer-land," should grow out of all sympathy with the critical vigilance and suspicion about details which characterize the intellectual condition of the "Sadducees," as our author loves to call the earth-bound portion of the community. From his snug home in an atmosphere in which pianos float, "soft warm hands" bud forth from vacant space, and lead pencils write alone, the spiritualist has a right to feel a personal disdain

¹ Selected paragraphs comprising about one-half of an unsigned review of E. Sargent's *Planchette: or the Despair of Science*; which review was originally printed in *Boston Daily Advertiser*, March 10, 1869. The book offered a history and defense of modern spiritualism. In connection with the date of the review it is to be noted that the Society for Psychical Research was not founded until 1882.

for the "scientific man" who stands inertly aloof in his pretentious enlightenment. Scientific men seem to demand that spiritualists should *come* and demonstrate to them the truth of their doctrine, by something little short of a surgical operation upon their intellects. But the spiritualist, from his point of view, is quite justified in leaving them forever on their "laws of nature," unconverted, since he in no way needs their countenance.

But an author writing avowedly for purposes of propagandism should have recognized more fully the attitude of this class, and recollected that one narrative personally vouched for and *minutely* controlled, would be more apt to fix their attention, than a hundred of the striking but comparatively vaguely reported second-hand descriptions which fill many of the pages of this book. The present attitude of society on this whole question is as extraordinary and anomalous as it is discreditable to the pretensions of an age which prides itself on enlightenment and the diffusion of knowledge. We see tens of thousands of respectable people on the one hand admitting as facts of every day certainty, what tens of thousands of others equally respectable claim to be abject and contemptible delusion; while other tens of thousands are content to stand passively in the dark between these two hosts and in doubt, the matter meanwhile being—rightfully considered—one of really transcendent interest. In this state of things recrimination is merely lost time. Those people who have the interests of truth

at heart should remember that personal dignity is of very little comparative consequence. If our author, in concert with some good mediums, had instituted some experiments in which everything should be protected from the possibility of deceit, remembering that the morality of no one in such a case is to be taken for granted, and that such personal precautions cannot be offensively construed, he would probably have made a better contribution to clearing up the subject than he has now done.

.

II

LEWES'S "PROBLEMS OF LIFE AND MIND"¹

[1875]

MORE problems! Why should we read them if they are not our problems, but only Mr. Lewes's? Of all forms of earthly worry, the metaphysical worry seems the most gratuitous. If it lands us in permanently skeptical conclusions, it is worse than superfluous; and if (as is almost always the case with non-skeptical systems) it simply ends by "in-dorsing" common-sense, and reinstating us in the possession of our old feelings, motives, and duties, we may fairly ask if it was worth while to go so far round in order simply to return to our starting-point and be put back into the old harness. Is not the primal state of philosophic innocence, since the practical difference is *nil*, as good as the state of reflective enlightenment? And need we, provided we can stay at home and take the world for granted, undergo the fatigues of a campaign with such uncomfortable spirits as the present author, merely for the sake of coming to our own again, with nothing gained but the pride of having accompanied his

[¹ Review of *Problems of Life and Mind*, by George Henry Lewes, first series, 1875. Reprinted from *Atlantic Monthly*, 1875, 36, 361-363. Ed.]

expedition? So we may ask. But is the pride nothing? Consciousness is the only measure of utility, and even if no philosophy could ever alter a man's motives in life,—which is untrue,—that it should add to their conscious completeness is enough to make thousands take upon themselves its burden of perplexities. We like the sense of companionship with better and more eager intelligences than our own, and that increment of self-respect which we all experience in passing from an instinctive to a reflective state, and adopting a belief which hitherto we simply underwent.

Mr. Lewes has drunk deep of the waters of skepticism that have of late years been poured out so freely in England, but he has worked his way through them into a constructive activity; and his work is only one of many harbingers of a reflux in the philosophic tide. All philosophic reflection is essentially skeptical at the start. To common-sense, and in fact to all living thought, matters actually thought of are held to *be* absolutely and objectively as we think them. Every representation *per se*, and while it persists, is of something absolutely so. It becomes relative, flickering, insecure, only when reduced, only in the light of *further* consideration which we may bring forward to confront it with. This may be called its *reductive*. Now the reductive of most of our confident beliefs about Being is the reflection that they are *our* beliefs; that we are turbid media; and that a form of being may exist uncontaminated by the touch of the fal-

lacious knowing subject. In the light of this conception, the Being we know droops its head; but until this conception has been formed it knows no fear. The motive of most philosophies has been to find a position from which one could *exorcise the reductive*, and remain securely in possession of a secure belief. Ontologies do this by their conception of "necessary" truth, *i. e.*, a truth with no alternative; with a *præterea nihil*, and not a *plus ultra possibile*; a truth, in other words, whose only reductive would be the impossible, nonentity, or zero.

In such conclusions as these philosophy re-joins hands with common-sense. For above all things common-sense craves for a stable conception of things. We desire to know what to *expect*. Once having settled down into an attitude towards life both as to its details and as a whole, an incalculable disturbance which might arise, disconcert all our judgments, and render our efforts vain, would be in the last degree undesirable. Now as a matter of fact we do live in a world from which as a rule we know what to expect. Whatever items we found together in the past are likely to coexist in the future. Our confidence in this state of things deprives us of all sense of insecurity; if we lay our plans rightly the world will fulfill its part of the contract. Common-sense, or popular philosophy, explains this by what is called the judgment of Substance, that is, by the postulation of a persistent Nature, immutable by time, behind each phenomenal group, which

binds that group together and makes it what it is essentially and eternally. Even in regard to that mass of accidents which must be expected to occur in some shape but cannot be accurately prophesied in detail, we set our minds at rest, by saying that the world with all its events has a substantial cause; and when we call this cause God, Love, or Perfection, we feel secure that whatever the future may harbor, it cannot at bottom be inconsistent with the character of this term. So our attitude towards even the unexpected is in a general sense defined.

Now this substantial judgment has been adopted by most dogmatic philosophies. They have explained the collocations of phenomena by an immutable underlying nature or natures, beside or beyond which they have posited either the sphere of the Impossible, if they professed rationalism throughout, or merely a *de facto* Nonentity if they admitted the element of Faith as legitimate. But the skeptical philosophers who have of late predominated in England have denied that the substantial judgment is legitimate at all, and in so doing have seemed among other things to deny the legitimacy of the confidence and repose which it engenders. The habitual concurrence of the same phenomena is not a case of dynamic connection at all, they say. It may happen again—but we have no rational warrant for asserting that it must. The syntheses of data we think necessary are only so to *us*, from habit. The universe may turn inside

out to-morrow, for aught we know; our knowledge grasps neither the essential nor the immutable. Instead of a nonentity beyond, there is a darkness, peopled it may be with every nightmare shape. Their total divergence from popular philosophy has many other aspects, but this last thought is their reductive of its tendency to theosophize and of its dogmatic confidence in general.

The originality of Mr. Lewes is that while vigorously hissing the "Substances" of common-sense and metaphysics off the stage, he also scouts the reductive which the school of Mill has used, and maintains the absoluteness and essentiality of our knowledge. The world according to him as according to them is truly enough only the world *as known*, but *for us* there *is* no other world. For grant a moment the existence of such a one: we could never be affected by it; as soon as we were affected, however, we should be knowers of it, in the only sense in which there is any knowledge at all, the sense of subjective determination,—and it would have become our world. Now, as such it is a universe and not a heap of sand, or, as has been said, a *nulliverse* like Mill's. Its truths are *æternæ veritates*, essential, exhaustive, immutable. We can settle down upon them and they will keep their promise. The sum of all the properties *is* the substance; the predicates *are* the subject; each property *is* the other viewed in a "different aspect." The same collocations must therefore occur in the future. So far from the notion of cause being illusory, the cause

is the effect "in another relation," and the effect the procession of the cause. The identification by continuity of what the senses discriminate, and so, according to the reigning empiricism, disunite, is carried so far by Mr. Lewes that in his final chapter he affirms the psychic event which accompanies a tremor in the brain to be that tremor "in a different aspect."

His arguments we have not space to expose. One thing is obvious, however: that his results will meet with even greater disfavor from the empirics than from the ontologists in philosophy, and that the pupils of Mill and Bain in particular will find this bold identification of the sensibly diverse too mystical to pass muster. It is in fact the revival of the old Greek puzzle of the One and the Many—how each becomes the other—which they, if we apprehend them aright, have escaped by the simple expedient of suppressing the One. They will join hands too with the ontologists in conjuring up beyond the universe recognized by Mr. Lewes the spectre of an hypothetical possible Something, not a Zero—only the ontologists will not join them again in letting this fill the blank form of a logical reductive pure and simple, but will dub it the universe *in se*, or the universe as related to God, if Mr. Lewes still insists on their defining everything as in relation. That Mr. Lewes should say candidly of this thought that *he* is willing to ignore it, cannot restrain them. We may conclude, therefore, that ever-sprouting reflection, or skepticism, just as it

preys on all other systems, may also in strict theoretic legitimacy prey upon the ultimate data of Mr. Lewes's Positivism taken as a whole; even though all men should end by admitting that within the bounds of that empirical whole, his views of the necessary continuity between the parts were true. To this reduction by a *plus ultra*, Mr. Lewes can only retort by saying, "Foolishness! So much ontologic thirst is a morbid appetite." But in doing this he simply falls back on the *act of faith* of all positivisms. Weary of the infinitely receding chase after a theoretically warranted Absolute, they return to their starting-point and break off there, like practical men, saying, "Physics, we espouse thee; for better or worse be thou our Absolute!"

Skepticism, or unrest, in short, can always have the last word. After every definition of an object, reflection may arise, infect it with the *cogito*, and so discriminate it from the object *in se*. This is possible *ad infinitum*. That we do not all do it is because at a certain point most of us get tired of the play, resolve to stop, and assuming something for true, pass on to a life of action based on that.

We wish that Mr. Lewes had emphasized this volitional moment in his Positivism. Although the consistent pyrrhonist is the only theoretically unassailable man, it does not follow that he is the right man. Between us and the universe, there are no "rules of the game." The important thing is that our judgments should be right, not that they should observe a logical etiquette. There is a brute, blind

element in every thought which still has the vital heat within it and has not yet been reflected on. Our present thought always has it, we cannot escape it, and we for our part think philosophers had best acknowledge it, and avowedly *posit* their universe, staking their persons, so to speak, on the truth of their position. In practical life we despise a man who will risk nothing, even more than one who will heed nothing. May it not be that in the theoretic life the man whose scruples about flawless accuracy of demonstration keep him forever shivering on the brink of Belief is as great an imbecile as the man at the opposite pole, who simply consults his prophetic soul for the answer to everything? What is this but saying that our opinions about the nature of things belong to our moral life?

Mr. Lewes's personal fame will now stand or fall by the *credo* he has published. We do not think the fame should suffer, even though we reserve our assent to important parts of the creed. The book is full of vigor of thought and felicity of style, in spite of its diffuseness and repetition. It will refute many of the objections made by critics to the first volume; and will, we doubt not, be a most important ferment in the philosophic thought of the immediate future.

III

GERMAN PESSIMISM¹

[1875]

THE German intellect is a far more complex affair than the English intellect, and *a fortiori* than the French or Italian. From sensualism to mysticism, from fatalistic quietism to the most ruthless practicality, there is hardly a mental quality or tendency which one will not find better represented in Germany than elsewhere; save only one, and that is the quality of *naïveté* or spontaneity. Every subject of King William is, *ex-officio*, reflective and self-conscious, unable to surrender himself to any sentiment, however simple, till he has reflected on it and woven it into a systematic theory, or in other words transmuted it from an impulse into a principle. Whatever the German feels or does, he does with malice prepense; he *justifies* himself, by showing that the act or thought must rightfully flow from one in his position. Whether the position be that of a citizen properly filled with *Nationalbewusstsein*, of a competitor in the egoistic struggle for existence, of a subject of the Categorical Imperative, or of a *Moment* in the *Weltprozess*, is all

[¹ A review of *Der Modern Pessimismus*, by Dr. Edmund Pfleiderer. Berlin, 1875. Reprinted from *Nation*, 1875, 21, 233-234. Ed.]

one—we find everywhere that same cold-blooded self-corroboration and merging of the personal deed in universal considerations which, more than material spoliation and Draconian discipline, exasperated the French during the late invasion, and have made them call the Germans “hypocrites” ever since.

Perhaps as striking an illustration of this overweening tendency to theorize as can be found is afforded by the popular German school of pessimistic philosophy, of which Professor Pfeiderer's pamphlet is the latest and one of the ablest criticisms. In other countries, aristocratic misanthropes, dyspeptic pleasure-seekers, and unappreciated geniuses have existed, and their utterances never passed beyond the sphere of splenetic or pathetic individuality. Souls with an unassuageable love of justice and harmony have also existed, and their utterances, like Leopardi's and Shelley's, have been lyrical cries of defiance or despair, which perished with them. It was reserved for Schopenhauer to show his countrymen that the cursing and melting moods could be kept alive permanently, and extended indefinitely by making proper theoretic deliberation; and Schopenhauer's disciple Hartmann, whose work, the *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, has met with one of the greatest literary successes of the time, and carried the new gospel into regions where the torch of metaphysics had never yet begun to glimmer, has made everything so simple and perfect in his system, that all who have

a quarrel with destiny, whether peevish or tragic, can be housed there side by side, without altering their mode of life or losing any of their "home comforts" in the process of cure. For it would be unpardonable in these philosophers to preach disgust with life unless the disgust were likely to lead the way to a cure. Existence being of course the original sin of that substance or essence of things which Schopenhauer calls "Will," and to which Von Hartmann gives the name of "the Unconscious," annihilation or *nirvana* is of course the cure. And in both philosophies this may be attained through the thorough and final intellectual persuasion of the vanity of all the goods of life and the consequent extinction of every desire.

But here begins the divergence. The aristocratic master has no hopes of the human or any other race as a whole, and his *nirvana* is restricted to the few who are ascetics and saints. In the witty words of Pfeiderer, the battle-cry with which he plunges into life's fray and rallies his followers about him is the well-known "*sauve qui peut.*" The pupil, on the contrary, equipped with a Berlin education and imbued with notions of evolution and progress which to Schopenhauer (who wrote before Darwin) were profoundly distasteful, provides for a collective salvation, based on no less a performance than a unanimous resolve on the part of all sentient beings, penetrated at last through and through with *tedium vitæ*, and despair of gaining anything by fighting it out on the line of existence—

to stop, and back out of it, when *this* world will cease at any rate. Whether there will ever be another world depends wholly on whether the wicked old "Unconscious" chooses again to emerge from its state of mere potentiality; and as it is being without rhyme or reason, a mere *brutum*, the chances for and against that unlucky eventuality are just even, or expressed in mathematical language by the fraction one-half. Schopenhauer's philosophy, says Hartmann, is one of despair. So far is this from being the worst of all possible worlds, that it is the best, for it tends invincibly to the *summum bonum* of extinction. Let no man then desert the ranks, but each labor in the Lord's vineyard, sneering, lamenting, and cursing as he pleases, getting indigestion himself, and begetting young, to inoculate them with a disgust greater than his own, and co-operating so with the grand movement of things which is bound to culminate in deliverance. Above all, let us have no standing aloof and trying prematurely to save one's individual self, like Schopenhauer's ascetics. This delightfully unselfish submission to epicurean practice in the midst of pessimistic theory is Hartmann's cleverest stroke. As in Béranger's song:

"Nous laisserions finir le monde
Si nos femmes le voulaient bien!"

Schopenhauer was truly a bungler. But, joking apart, the reader can easily see how little living seriousness Hartmann possesses. He seems to us

to have a clever journalistic mind, with a Prussian education, ready for any paradox which will make a sensation, and without a grain of that *auctoritas* which belongs to the sombre and impressive genius of his teacher.

The latter is assuredly one of the greatest of writers. When such a one expatiates upon the texts of *Homo homini lupus* and Woman the focus of the world's illusion, he will have all the cynics with a taste for good literature for his admirers. And when he preaches compassion to be the one cardinal virtue, and morbidly reiterates the mystic Sanskrit motto, *Tat twan asi*—This [maniac or cripple] art thou—as the truth of truths, he will of course exert a spell over persons in the unwholesome sentimental moulting-time of youth. But the thing which to our Anglo-Saxon mind seems so outlandish is that crowds of dapper fellows, revelling in animal spirits and conscious strength, should enroll themselves in cold blood as his permanent apostles, and feel as sorely when their pessimism is attacked as the fabled old dead inmate of the almshouse did when, not good enough for heaven, she was also shut out from hell, and sat on the road and wept that she should have to return to Tewkesbury.

For, however it may stand with Tewkesbury, in the world at large, practically considered, optimism is just as true as pessimism. These Germans can attain their absolute luxury of woe only by speaking of things transcendently and metaphysically. As far as the outward animal life goes, the existence

of a Walt Whitman confounds Schopenhauer quite as thoroughly as the existence of a Leopardi refutes Dr. Pangloss; and Hartmann's elaborate indictment of the details of life is precisely on a par in point of logic with the "wisdom and beneficence" philosophy of the most edifying and gelatinous Sunday-school orator. Common-sense contents itself with the unreconciled contradiction, laughs when it can, and weeps when it must, and makes, in short, a practical compromise, without trying a theoretical solution. This attitude is of course respectable. But if one must needs have an ultimate theoretical solution, nothing is more certain than this, that no one need assent to that of pessimism unless he freely prefer to do so. Concerning the metaphysical world, or the ultimate meaning of things, there is no outward evidence—nothing but conceptions of the possible. Distinct among these is that of a moral order whose life *may* be fed by the contradictions of good and evil that occur in the external phenomenal order. Those empiricists who are celebrating nowadays with such delight the novel mathematical notion of a fourth or "transcendental" dimension in space, should be the last persons to dogmatize against the possibility of a deeper dimension in *being* than the flat surface-pattern which is offered by its pleasures and pains, taken merely as such. Now, if such an order in the world is possibly true, and if, supposing it to be true, it may afford the basis for an ultimate optimism (quite distinct from mere nerveless senti-

mentalism), there is no reason which should deter a person bent on having some commanding theory of life from adopting it as his hypothesis or working faith. He may of course prefer pessimism, but only at the price of a certain internal inconsistency. (We purposely neglect to consider dogmatic materialism here.) For pessimism is really only consistent with a strictly dogmatic attitude. It is fatalistic in the thorough Oriental sense, being by its very definition a theory from which one is bound to escape, *if he can*. Its account of things is confessedly abhorrent, and nothing but coercive outward evidence should make one stay within its pale. Now, a hypothetical door like that offered by the notion of a ransoming moral order "behind the veil" is better than no loophole of escape; and to refuse to give one's self the benefit of its presence argues either a perfectly morbid appetite for dogmatic forms of thought, or an astounding lack of genuine sense for the tragic, which sense undoubtedly varies, like every other, from man to man.

With transcendental optimism, on the other hand, it is just the reverse. If it is *true*, why, then, there is the deepest internal congruity in its *not* being mechanically forced on our belief. As a fatalistic *nolens-volens* creed, it would be devoid of all moral character. Or rather, we may not talk of its *being* true, but *becoming* true. Its full verification must be contingent on our complicity, both theoretical and practical: All that it asserts is that the facts of the world are a fit basis for the

summum bonum, if we do our share and react upon them as it is meant we should (with fortitude, for example, and undismayed hope). The world is thus absolutely good only in a potential or hypothetical sense, and the hypothetical form of the optimistic belief is the very signature of its consistency, and first condition of its probability. At the final integration of things, the world's goodness will be an accomplished fact and self-evident, but, till then, faith is the only legitimate attitude of mind it can claim from us.

So plain is all this that the pessimistic controversy has far more of an ethnic than a philosophic interest for us. We are only sorry that, at this distance, the data are too few for us to see what its full ethnic import is. If it simply result in confirming in Germany the tonic creed that there comes a time when every good, however precious, is fit for nothing but destruction, for the sake of a higher good, and that passive felicity is a dream, it can do no harm. Dr. Pfeiderer's pamphlet, which takes substantially the same ground as we do, is both temperate and witty, and may be cordially recommended to those interested in the subject.

IV

CHAUNCEY WRIGHT¹

[1875]

THE death which we briefly noticed last week reminds us most sadly of the law, that to be an effective great man one needs to have *many* qualities great. If power of analytic intellect pure and simple could suffice, the name of Chauncey Wright would assuredly be as famous as it is now obscure, for he was not merely the great mind of a village—if Cambridge will pardon the expression—but either in London or Berlin he would, with equal ease, have taken the place of master which he held with us. The reason why he is now gone without leaving any work which his friends can consider as a fair expression of his genius, is that his shyness, his want of ambition, and to a certain degree his indolence, were almost as exceptional as his power of thought. Had he, in early life, resolved to con-

[¹ Reprinted from *Nation*, 1875, 21, 194. James acknowledged his indebtedness to Wright's "intellectual companionship in old times," in the Preface to the *Principles of Psychology*, I, p. vii. He borrowed the expression cosmical "weather," in *Will to Believe*, p. 52. There are important points of resemblance between Wright and C. S. Peirce, to whom James gives the credit for pragmatism. Wright's death occurred on September 12, 1875, in his forty-fifth year. His *Philosophical Discussions* have been collected and edited with a biography by C. E. Norton, New York, 1877. Ed.]

centrate these and make himself a physicist, for example, there is no question but that his would have ranked to-day among the few first living names. As it was, he preferred general criticism and contemplation, and became something resembling more a philosopher of the antique or Socratic type than a modern *Gelehrter*. His best work has been done in conversation; and in the acts and writings of the many friends he influenced his spirit will, in one way or another, as the years roll on, be more operative than it ever was in direct production. Born at Northampton in 1830, graduating at Harvard in 1852, he left us in the plenitude of his powers. His outward work is limited to various articles in the *North American Review* (one of which Mr. Darwin thought important enough to reprint as a pamphlet in England), a paper or two in the Transactions of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a number of critical notices in our own pages—the latest of these being the article entitled “German Darwinism,” which we¹ published only two weeks ago. As a writer, he was defective in the shaping faculty—he failed to emphasize the articulations of his argument, to throw a high light, so to speak, on the important points; so that many a casual peruser has probably read on and never noticed the world of searching consequences which lurked involved in some inconspicuously placed word. He spent many years in computing for the *Nautical Almanac* and from time to time

¹ *The Nation*.

accepted some pedagogic work. He gave a course of University lectures on psychology in Harvard College in 1871, and last year he conducted there a course in mathematical physics. As little of a reader as an educated man well can be, he yet astonished every one by his omniscience, for no specialist could talk with Chauncey Wright without receiving some sort of instruction in his specialty. This was due to his irrepressible spontaneous habit of subtle thinking. Every new fact he learned set his whole mental organism in motion, and reflection did not cease till the novel thought was firmly woven with the entire system of his knowledge. Of course in this process new conclusions were constantly evolved, and many a man of science who hoped to surprise him with news of a discovery has been himself surprised by finding it already *constructed* by Wright from data separately acquired in this or that conversation with one or other of the many scholars of Cambridge or Boston, most of whom he personally knew so well.

In philosophy, he was a worker on the path opened by Hume, and a treatise on psychology written by him (could he have been spared and induced to undertake the drudgery) would probably have been the last and most accomplished utterance of what he liked to call the British school. He would have brought the work of Mill and Bain for the present to a conclusion. Of the two motives to which philosophic systems owe their being, the craving for consistency or unity in thought, and the de-

sire for a solid outward warrant for our emotional ends, his mind was dominated only by the former. Never in a human head was contemplation more separated from desire. Schopenhauer, who defined genius as a cognitive faculty manumitted from the service of the will, would have found in him an even stronger example of his definition than he cared to meet. For to Wright's mode of looking at the universe such ideas as pessimism or optimism were alike simply irrelevant. Whereas most men's interest in a thought is proportioned to its possible relation to human destiny, with him it was almost the reverse. When the mere actuality of phenomena will suffice to describe them, he held it pure excess and superstition to speak of a metaphysical whence or whither, of a substance, a meaning, or an end. Just as in cosmogony he preferred Mayer's theory to the nebular hypothesis, and in one of his earliest *North American Review* articles used the happy phrase, "cosmical weather," to describe the irregular dissipation and aggregation of worlds; so, in contemplating the totality of being, he preferred to think of phenomena as the result of a sort of ontologic weather, without inward rationality, an aimless drifting to and fro, from the midst of which relatively stable and so (for us) rational combinations may emerge. The order we observe in things needs *explanation* only on the supposition of a preliminary or potential disorder; and this he pointed out is, as things actually *are* orderly, a gratuitous notion. Anaxagoras, who introduced into philos-

COLLECTED ESSAYS AND REVIEWS [1875]

ophy the notion of the *νοῦς*, also introduced with it that of an antecedent chaos. But if there be no essential chaos, Mr. Wright used to say, an anti-chaotic *νοῦς* is superfluous. He particularly condemned the idea of substance as a metaphysical idol. When it was objected to him that there must be some principle of oneness in the diversity of phenomena—some *glue* to hold them together and make a universe out of their mutual independence, he would reply that there is no need of a glue to join things unless we apprehend some reason why they should fall asunder. Phenomena *are* grouped—more we cannot say of them. This notion that the actuality of a thing is the absolute totality of its being was perhaps never grasped by any one with such thoroughness as by him.

However different a philosophy one may hold from his, however one may deem that the lack of emotional bias which left him contented with the mere principle of parsimony as a criterion of universal truth was really due to a defect in the active or impulsive part of his mental nature, one must value none the less his formulæ. For as yet philosophy has celebrated hardly any stable achievements. The labors of philosophers have, however, been confined to deepening enormously the philosophic *consciousness*, and revealing more and more minutely and fully the import of metaphysical problems. In this preliminary task ontologists and phenomenologists, mechanists and teleologists, must join friendly hands, for each has been indispensable

to the work of the other, and the only foe of either is the common foe of both—namely, the practical, conventionally thinking man, to whom, as has been said, nothing has true seriousness but personal interests, and whose dry earnestness in those is only excelled by that of the brute, which takes everything for granted and never laughs.

Mr. Wright belonged to the precious band of genuine philosophers, and among them few can have been as completely disinterested as he. Add to this eminence his tireless amiability, his beautiful modesty, his affectionate nature and freedom from egotism, his childlike simplicity in worldly affairs, and we have the picture of a character of which his friends feel more than ever now the elevation and the rarity.

V

BAIN AND RENOUVIER¹

[1876]

PHILOSOPHY and psychology are such difficult studies that most of us may be said to read *in* the works of philosophers rather than to read them. We like, as it were, physically to rub our minds against the abstract problems in their pages; we enjoy the glimpses we get of their solution; but we *grasp* nothing but the concrete illustrations by the way and the explanations of details the author may give us. Accordingly, the more fertile a philosopher is in these, the more popular he will become. The two philosophers of indubitably the widest influ-

[¹ Review of *The Emotions and the Will*, by Alexander Bain, third edition, New York, 1876; and *Essais de Critique générale*, by Charles Renouvier, second edition, Paris, 1875. Reprinted from *Nation*, 1876, 22, 367-369. Bain was born in 1818 and died in 1903. James and Renouvier were for many years connected by bonds of friendship and mutual admiration. On James's part this admiration continued up to the time of his death. The posthumous *Some Problems of Philosophy* was dedicated to Renouvier in accordance with the author's express wish, James having left on record the following statement of his indebtedness: "He [Renouvier] was one of the greatest of philosophical characters, and but for the decisive impression made on me in the seventies by his masterly advocacy of pluralism, I might never have got free from the monistic superstition under which I had grown up" (*Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 165, note). Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 163; *Will to Believe*, p. 143; and below, p. 98. Renouvier was born in 1815, and died in full intellectual vigor in 1903. Ed.]

ence in England and America since Mill's death are Messrs. Bain and Spencer, who have little in common except the tendency to explain things by physical reasons as much as possible, and this abundance of illustrative fact; whilst Mr. Hodgson, a writer in our opinion vastly more thorough and original than either, is unread and unknown because in his books the concatenation of the thoughts is everything, and the illustrative instances subordinate. The thoroughness of the descriptive part of Bain's treatises, and the truly admirable sagacity of many of the psychological analyses and reductions they contain, has made them deservedly classical. It seems hardly worth while to devote our space to giving an account of the third edition of one of them, for every one interested in psychology must read the originals themselves. We propose, therefore, merely to use Mr. Bain for the purpose of giving greater relief to the merits of a French philosopher, Renouvier, who seems as yet unknown to English readers, but who has given to the philosophy which Bain represents a form in our opinion far more clear, perfect, and consistent than has been attained by any English writer.

For Bain is not only a psychologist proper, does not merely describe mental facts as items in the inventory of nature, but also speculates about nature as a whole. The fault we find in him in this capacity is his fragmentariness and consequent inconsistency. Fragmentariness—the willingness to settle only so much of a subject at a time as is

practically needful—has become such a tradition in the history of the British mind, that philosophers who, like Spencer, are thoroughly systematic and constructive in their form, are viewed with suspicion and dislike on that very account by many minds of Anglo-Saxon type. This is surely a vicious extreme, for the very impulse to which philosophies owe their being is the craving for a consistent completeness; and every powerful attempt to rear a thorough system of thought has an intellectual *style* about it which is, æsthetically considered, to say the least, far nobler than the slouchy dumping of materials to which Mr. Bain treats us.

The most important of these fragmentary British contributions to philosophy are the criticisms and negations called nominalism and nihilism. Together they form the positivism, empiricism, or phenomenalism which within a certain sphere are so congenial to the Anglo-Saxon mind. They assert that nothing has reality except actual particular facts. Such noumenal substances as matter, nature, power, are admitted alike by metaphysics and by popular philosophy or common sense; but criticism scrutinizes them only to proclaim that they are absolutely void of meaning except as names descriptive of particular phenomena. Describe *these* completely, and you have named all there is. If the particulars will happen just so each time, the assumption of a "substance" to produce them is mere image-worship—a fifth wheel to a coach. Accord-

ingly, the school of Mill and Bain regard the world as a mere sum of separate phenomena or representations which habitually group themselves into certain orders, with which we grow more or less familiar, and which consequently seem more or less rational and necessary. To account for the particular habits of grouping, or "laws" of nature and of mind, is on this theory the next problem. The English school has always tried more or less to evade this part of the subject, and, reducing the principles of grouping to as small a number as possible (*e.g.*, space and causality to time), it has treated what remained in a hazy sort of manner, as not worthy of much attention anyhow. M. Renouvier's polemic against the metaphysical notions of Substance, of Infinite in existence, and of abstract ideas seems to us more powerful than anything which has been written in English; but he differs from his English allies in giving as great an emphasis to the laws of grouping as to the phenomena grouped. The laws are for him equally with the phenomena absolute and distinct. In fact, a "phenomenon" apart from its group, law, or function is an inconceivable nonentity.

But his great point of divergence from Bain and Mill lies in his treatment of the problem of Freedom, and here, it seems to us, is shown the advantage of a systematically-thought philosophy over one fragmentarily fed from heterogeneous sources. We have no space to discuss the sources of the English prejudice in favor of psychical determinism.

Every reader of Mill's *Autobiography* will remember the striking passage in which he narrates the hypochondria which this doctrine produced in his youthful mind. It is the strongest proof of the essentially pious character of that mind that this inherited belief was clung to in spite of its not being logically called for by the rest of Mill's philosophic creed. For if any man may believe in free-will it is surely one who repudiates the notion of an infinite pre-existing substance from which "the remediless flux of existence" proceeds, and who denies that there is any real coerciveness in the relation of cause to effect. Both these denials were Mill's. M. Renouvier most justly insists that the only logical enemy of free-will is the doctrine of Substance or Pantheism. Spencer, for example, with his "Unknowable," is bound in honor to oppose it; but the opposition of Bain, who seems to hold to the ultimate distinctness of each phenomenon, and with the ultimate inexplicability of their order of succession, can only be regarded as a caprice.

Renouvier at a stroke clears the question of a cloud of quibbles by stating it in simple phenomenal terms. For him it is merely a question as to the ambiguity of certain futures, those human acts, namely, which are preceded by *deliberation*. What are the phenomena here? A representation arises in a mind, but ere it can discharge itself into a train of action, it is inhibited by another which confronts it. This, on the point of discharging itself, is again checked by the first, which returns with a reinforced

intensity, and so for a time the pendulum swings to and fro, till finally one or the other representation recurs with such a degree of reinforcement that the tumult ceases, and an act, a decision for the future, or the arrest of a passionate impulse takes place. This stable survival of one representation is called a volition. The whole question of its predetermination relates to the intensity of the degree of reinforcement with which the triumphant representation recurs. As a matter of fact, in critical cases (which are the only cases bearing on the question) this intensity is utterly unknown beforehand. Is it potentially and essentially a knowable quantity? If *not*, our acts are in certain cases original commencements of series of phenomena, whose realization excludes other series which were previously possible. If *so*, they form part of an adamant and eternal uniformity. But who shall decide? The argumentation of Bain that as a matter of fact men always do expect each other to act with predictable uniformity is—*sit venia verbo*—rubbish. It could never be urged by one who was not already on other grounds prejudiced in favor of determinism. In one of his earliest works, Helmholtz, who as well as any living man may claim to give voice to the scientific spirit, says that when the proximate causes of phenomena are alterable themselves, we must seek further for a cause of their alteration, and so on till we reach an unalterable principle.

“Now, whether [he continues], all events are to be carried back to such causes, whether nature be fully

explicable, or whether changes occur in it which do not fall under the law of necessary causality, and *do* consequently belong to the realm of freedom or spontaneity, cannot now be decided. It is, at all events, clear that a science whose object it is to understand nature must start with the assumption of her intelligibility, and conclude and enquire according to this assumption until it at last is forced by irrefutable facts to the admission of its own limitations."

The "assumption" of a fixed law in natural science is thus, according to this authority, an intellectual *postulate*, just as the assumption of an ultimate law of indetermination might be a moral postulate in treating of certain human deliberations. Is each assumption true in its sphere, or is determinism universal? Since no man can decide empirically, must one remain for ever uncertain, or shall one anticipate evidence and boldly choose one's side? Apart from the fact that doubt is practically impossible in certain cases which touch the conduct of life, doubt itself is an active state, one of voluntary inhibition or suspense. So that whichever plan one adopts, one's state is the result of other facts than pure receptivity of intelligence. The entire nature of the man, intellectual, affective, and volitional, is (whether avowedly or not) exhibited in the theoretic attitude he takes in such a question as this. And this leads M. Renouvier to a most vigorous and original discussion of the ultimate grounds of certitude, of belief *in general*, from which he returns to make his decision about this particular point. All yard-stick criteria of certi-

tude have failed. Mr. Spencer's "inconceivability of the opposite" breaks down from the practical impossibility of unanimity in any given case. When the Philosopher of Evolution says we *ought* to find the opposite of his First Principles inconceivable and dubs us "*pseudo*" thinkers if we do not, he simply begs the question and appeals to the authority of his personal insight as against ours. Now, says Renouvier, such an appeal is at bottom inevitable so soon as we leave the narrow standing-point of the present moment in consciousness (pyrrhonism). This latter alone is the *aliquid inconcussum* philosophers have sought; but it is barren. Beyond it everywhere is doubt.

"The radical sign of will, the essential mark of that achieved development which makes man capable of speculating on all things and raises him to his dignity of an independent and autonomous being, is the possibility of doubt. . . . The ignorant man doubts little, the fool still less, the madman not at all. . . . Certitude is not and cannot be an absolute condition. It is, what is too often forgotten, a state and an act of man . . . a state in which he posits his consciousness, such as it is, and stands by it. Properly speaking, there is no certitude; all there is is men who are certain. . . . Certitude is thus nothing but belief . . . a moral attitude."

Thus in every wide theoretical conclusion we must seem more or less arbitrarily to *choose* our side. Of course the choice may at bottom be pre-determined in each case, but also it may not. This brings us back to our theoretical dilemma about

freedom, concerning which we must now bow to the necessity of making a choice; for suspense itself would be a choice, and a most practical one, since by it we should forfeit the possible benefits of boldly espousing a possible truth. If this *be* a moral world, there are cases in which any indecision about its being so must be death to the soul. Now, if our choice is predetermined, there is an end of the matter; whether predetermined to the truth of fatality or the delusion of liberty, is all one for us. But if our choice is truly free, then the only possible way of getting at that truth is by the exercise of the freedom which it implies. Here the act of belief and the object of belief coalesce, and the very essential logic of the situation demands that we wait not for any outward sign, but, with the possibility of doubting open to us, voluntarily take the alternative of faith. Renouvier boldly avows the full conditions under which alone we can be right if freedom is true, and says: "Let our liberty pronounce on its own real existence." It and necessity being alike indemonstrable by any quasi-material process, must be *postulated* if taken at all.

"I prefer to affirm my liberty and to affirm it by means of my liberty. . . . My moral and practical certitude begins *logically* by the certitude of my freedom, just as *practically* my freedom has always had to intervene in the constitution of my speculative certitude."

Others need not decide in the same way, but let them confess, if their way is determinism, that un-

less they deduce it *a priori* from the existence of a metaphysical substance, they *choose* it just as our author chooses his way, because on the whole they prefer it. This fact is usually unconsciously smuggled out of sight; but, concealed or expressed, it debars either side from protesting on grounds of logical method, or form of procedure, against the other. The protest must come from extra-logical considerations; and the ultimate decision of which side is right and which wrong shall only be reached *ambulando* or at the final integration of things, if at all. Of course, freedom thus carried into the very heart of our theoretic activity becomes the cornerstone of our author's philosophy, and by its use he thinks "the minimum of faith produces the maximum of result."

VI

RENAN'S "DIALOGUES"¹

[1876]

"Encore une étoile qui file;
File, file, et disparaît!"

THIS last production of a writer who at one time seemed, to say the least, the most exquisite literary genius of France, is really sad reading for any one who would gladly be assured that that country is robust and fertile still. It seems to us no less than an example of mental ruin—the last expression of a nature in which the seeds of insincerity and foppishness, which existed at the start alongside of splendid powers, have grown up like rank weeds and smothered the better possibilities. The dialogues which form the only new part of the book are simply priggishness rampant, an indescribable unmanliness of tone compounded of a sort of histrionically sentimental self-conceit, and a nerveless and boneless fear of what will become of the universe if "l'homme vulgaire" is allowed to go on. M. Renan's idea of God seems to be that of a power to whom one may successfully go like a tell-tale child and say: "Please, won't you make l'homme vul-

[¹ Review of *Dialogues et Fragments Philosophiques*, by Ernest Renan, Paris, 1876. Reprinted with omissions from *Nation*, 1876, 25, 78-79. Ed.]

gaire' stop?" As the latter waxes every day more fat and insolent, the belief in God burns dim, and is replaced by the idea of a kind of cold-blooded destiny whose inscrutable and inhuman purposes we are blindly serving, with at most the relief of making piquant guesses and epigrams as we go, about our Master and ourselves.

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The other papers in the volume show the same qualities and defects—sweetness of diction and delicacy of apprehension in detail, with vagueness, pretension, and deep ignorance of the subject where the subject is the history of philosophic thought. The best excuse one can make for them is that they are but half sincere. But, in a writer of Renan's peculiar pretensions, that is a fatal excuse. In his earlier writings all the suavities and many of the severities of language were employed in painting the distinction between the "âme d'élite," the "esprit honnête," and the common man; how the latter was wedded to superficiality and passive enjoyment, whilst the former found austere "joys of the soul" in the pursuit of wisdom and virtue. These surely imply sincerity. The gifted writer particularly congratulated himself on having preserved the vigor of his soul "dans un pays éteint, en un siècle sans espérance. . . . Consolons nous," he cried, "par nos chimères, par notre noblesse, par notre dédain!" "The true atheist is the frivolous man" is one of his early phrases which has been often quoted. But already in his

Antichrist, published after the Commune, he spoke of the summit of wisdom being the persuasion that at bottom all is vanity; and if this book be really half trifling, he would seem practically to have espoused that persuasion—in other words, to have become a frivolous man, or, according to his own definition, an atheist. Indeed, if one were to seek a single phrase which should define the essence of religion, it would be the phrase: all is *not* vanity. The solace and anæsthetic which lies in the conclusion of Ecclesiastes is good for many of us; but M. Renan's ostentatious pretension to an exquisite sort of religious virtue has debarred him from the right to enjoy its comforts. That *esprit vulgaire*, Josh Billings, says that if you have \$80,000 at interest, and own the house you live in, it is not much trouble to be a philosopher. M. Renan, after parading before our envious eyes in fine weather the spectacle of a man *savourer*-ing his *dédain* and enjoying the exquisitely voluptuous sensation of tasting his own spiritual pre-eminence, must not take it hard if we insist on a little more courage in him when the wind begins to blow. We do not know any better than he what the Democratic religion which is invading the Western world has in store for us. We dislike the "Commune" as well as he; but it is a fair presumption that the cards of humanity have not all been played out. And meanwhile, since no one has any authoritative information about the final upshot of things, and yet, since all men have a mighty desire to *get on* if they can, it cannot be too often repeated

[1876]

RENAN'S "DIALOGUES"

that they will all use the *practical* standard in measuring the excellence of their brother men: not the man of the most delicate sensibility but he who on the whole is the most *helpful* man will be reckoned the best man. The political or spiritual hero will always be the one who, when others crumbled, stood firm till a new order built itself around him; who showed a way out and beyond where others could only see written "no thoroughfare." M. Renan's dandified despair has nothing in common with this type.

VII

LEWES'S "PHYSICAL BASIS OF MIND"¹

[1877]

THOSE readers whom the superiority of the second volume of Mr. Lewes's *Problems* over the first has led to expect an even crescendo of excellence in that ponderous and somewhat pretentious publication, will be much disappointed after reading this third instalment. The diffuseness and damnable iteration are there as much as ever, but the new truths hang fire and fail to appear. It seems indeed as if the author had started to write rather with a vague aspiration after *some* truth than a distinct apprehension of any, and were letting his pen run on in the persuasion that a great discovery would surely trickle out of it, if only the scythe of Chronos might not cut him short. This is truly an excellent way of making discoveries, but usually it is the discovery that we publish, while the process is suppressed. Mr. Lewes has given us the process in five hundred pages, and—let us charitably say—reserved the discovery for the next volume. Constantly he seems on the point of making it. An un-

[¹ Opening paragraph of a review of G. H. Lewes's *Physical Basis of Mind*, 1877, the sequel to the book reviewed above, p. 4. Reprinted with omissions from *Nation*, 1877, 25, 290. Ed.]

impeachable scaffolding of first principles is laid down, the arguments seem to mass together like thunder-clouds, the air quivers with expectation, and we are sure that on turning the page the sacred rain will descend on our patient and thirsty souls, when lo! a new chapter begins with a new statement of the first principles, adorned with fresh illustrations: we forget the event we felt ourselves led up to, the sky empties itself again, and we return to our original drought. Not that the first principles of Mr. Lewes are not admirable. They surely are. But the mind can no more feed on pure first principles than the body can live on pure nitrogen and carbon. Only the *axiomata media* are fertile, and lead to particular discoveries. It is a bad sign when a thinker keeps falling back on abstractions so true that all must applaud them, but so broad that they form quite as good a shelter for one doctrine as for another. What boots it when we are really curious to find some one *elementary* factor or law of living matter to be told that "Life is the connexus of functions"? Or if a psychologist is really puzzling his brain about very special and particular difficulties, how can it profit him to be elaborately reminded by Mr. Lewes that confusion of terms is a great source of error, that we should everywhere keep account of special differences no less than fundamental identities, that property must never be confounded with function, that sensibility makes life a phenomenon of a higher order than mechanism, and the like? Not, indeed, since reading *Daniel De-*

COLLECTED ESSAYS AND REVIEWS [1877]

ronda have we been so annoyed by a writer's redundancy, have we found ourselves so persistently seized by the button and moralized to when we were most impatient for the story to move along and for the author to effect something with his materials.

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VIII

REMARKS ON SPENCER'S DEFINITION OF MIND AS CORRESPONDENCE¹

[1878]

As a rule it may be said that, at a time when readers are so overwhelmed with work as they are at the present day, all purely critical and destructive writing ought to be reprobated. The half-gods generally refuse to go, in spite of the ablest criticism, until the gods actually *have* arrived; but then, too, criticism is hardly needed. But there are cases in which every rule may be broken. "What!" exclaimed Voltaire, when accused of offering no substitute for the Christianity he attacked, "*je vous délivre d'une bête féroce, et vous me demandez par quoi je la remplace!*" Without comparing Mr. Spencer's definition of Mind either to Christianity or to a "*bête féroce*," it may certainly be said to be very far-reaching in its consequences, and, accord-

[¹ Reprinted from *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 1878, 12, 1-18. The central idea of this essay is the teleological character of mind. This idea may be said to be the germinal idea of James's psychology, epistemology, and philosophy of religion. *Of. Will to Believe*, p. 117 ("Reflex Action and Theism"), where this essay is referred to, with the remark that "the conceiving or theorizing faculty . . . functions *exclusively for the sake of ends* that . . . are set by our emotional and practical subjectivity." Ed.]

ing to certain standards, noxious; whilst probably a large proportion of those hard-headed readers who subscribe to the *Popular Science Monthly* and *Nature*, and whose sole philosopher Mr. Spencer is, are fascinated by it without being in the least aware what its consequences are.

The defects of the formula are so glaring that I am surprised it should not long ago have been critically overhauled. The reader will readily recollect what it is. In part III of his *Principles of Psychology*,¹ Mr. Spencer, starting from the supposition that the most essential truth concerning mental evolution will be that which allies it to the evolution nearest akin to it, namely, that of Life, finds that the formula "*adjustment of inner to outer relations*," which was the definition of life, comprehends also "the entire process of mental evolution." In a series of chapters of great apparent thoroughness and minuteness he shows how all the different grades of mental perfection are expressed by the degree of extension of this adjustment, or, as he here calls it, "correspondence," in space, time, specialty, generality, and integration. The polyp's tentacles contract only to immediately present stimuli, and to almost all alike. The mammal will store up food for a day, or even for a season; the bird will start on its migration for a goal hundreds of miles away; the savage will sharpen his arrows to hunt next year's game; while the astronomer will proceed, equipped with all his instru-

[¹ Published in 1855. Ed.]

ments, to a point thousands of miles distant, there to watch, at a fixed day, hour, and minute, a transit of Venus or an eclipse of the Sun.

The picture drawn is so vast and simple, it includes such a multitude of details in its monotonous frame-work, that it is no wonder that readers of a passive turn of mind are, usually, more impressed by it than by any portion of the book. But on the slightest scrutiny its solidity begins to disappear. In the first place, one asks, what right has one, in a formula embracing professedly the "entire process of mental evolution," to mention only phenomena of cognition, and to omit all sentiments, all æsthetic impulses, all religious emotions and personal affections? The ascertainment of outward fact constitutes only one species of mental activity. The genus contains, in addition to purely cognitive judgments, or judgments of the actual—judgments that things do, as a matter of fact, exist so or so—an immense number of emotional judgments: judgments of the ideal, judgments that things *should* exist thus and not so. How much of our mental life is occupied with this matter of a better or a worse? How much of it involves preferences or repugnances on our part? We cannot laugh at a joke, we cannot go to one theatre rather than another, take more trouble for the sake of our own child than our neighbor's; we cannot long for vacation, show our best manners to a foreigner, or pay our pew rent, without involving in the premises of our action some element which has nothing what-

ever to do with simply cognizing the actual, but which, out of alternative possible actuals, selects one and cognizes that as the ideal. In a word, "Mind," as we actually find it, contains all sorts of laws—those of logic, of fancy, of wit, of taste, decorum, beauty, morals, and so forth, as well as of perception of fact. Common sense estimates mental excellence by a combination of all these standards, and yet how few of them correspond to anything that actually *is*—they are laws of the Ideal, dictated by subjective *interests* pure and simple. Thus the greater part of Mind, quantitatively considered, refuses to have anything to do with Mr. Spencer's definition. It is quite true that these ideal judgments are treated by him with great ingenuity and felicity at the close of his work—indeed, his treatment of them there seems to me to be its most admirable portion. But they are there handled as separate items having no connection with that extension of the "correspondence" which is maintained elsewhere to be the all-sufficing law of mental growth.

Most readers would dislike to admit without coercion that a law was adequate which obliged them to erase from literature (if by literature were meant anything worthy of the title of "mental product") all works except treatises on natural science, history, and statistics. Let us examine the reason that Mr. Spencer appears to consider coercive.

It is this: That, since every process grows more

and more complicated as it develops, more swarmed over by incidental and derivative conditions which disguise and adulterate its original simplicity, the only way to discover its true and essential form is to trace it back to its earliest beginning. There it will appear in its genuine character pure and undefiled. Religious, æsthetic, and ethical judgments, having grown up in the course of evolution, by means that we can very plausibly divine, of course may be stripped off from the main stem of intelligence and leave that undisturbed. With a similar intent Mr. Tylor says: "Whatever throws light on the origin of a conception throws light on its validity." Thus, then, there is no resource but to appeal to the polyp, or whatever shows us the form of evolution just *before* intelligence, and what that, and only what that, contains will be the root and heart of the matter.

But no sooner is the reason for the law thus enunciated than many objections occur to the reader. In the first place, the general principle seems to lead to absurd conclusions. If the embryologic line of appeal can alone teach us the genuine essences of things, if the polyp is to dictate our law of mind to us because he came first, where are we to stop? He must himself be treated in the same way. Back of him lay the not-yet-polyp, and, back of all, the universal mother, fire-mist. To seek there for the reality, of course would reduce all thinking to nonentity, and, although Mr. Spencer would probably not regard this conclusion as a *reductio ad*

absurdum of his principle, since it would only be another path to his theory of the Unknowable, less systematic thinkers may hesitate. But, waiving for the moment the question of principle, let us admit that relatively to *our* thought, at any rate, the polyp's thought is pure and undefiled. Does the study of the polyp lead us distinctly to Mr. Spencer's formula of correspondence? To begin with, if that formula be meant to include disinterested scientific curiosity, or "correspondence" in the sense of cognition, with no ulterior selfish end, the polyp gives it no countenance whatever. He is as innocent of scientific as of moral and æsthetic enthusiasm; he is the most narrowly teleological of organisms; reacting, so far as he reacts at all, only for self-preservation.

This leads us to ask what Mr. Spencer exactly means by the word correspondence. Without explanation, the word is wholly indeterminate. Everything corresponds in some way with everything else that co-exists in the same world with it. But, as the formula of correspondence was originally derived from biology, we shall possibly find in our author's treatise on that science an exact definition of what he means by it. On seeking there, we find nowhere a definition, but numbers of synonyms. The inner relations are "adjusted," "conformed," "fitted," "related," to the outer. They must "meet" or "balance" them. There must be "concord" or "harmony" between them. Or, again, the organism must "counteract" the changes in the environment.

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But these words, too, are wholly indeterminate. The fox is most beautifully "adjusted" to the hounds and huntsmen who pursue him; the limestone "meets" molecule by molecule the acid which corrodes it; the man is exquisitely "conformed" to the *trichina* which invades him, or to the typhus poison which consumes him; and the forests "harmonize" incomparably with the fires that lay them low. Clearly, a further specification is required; and, although Mr. Spencer shrinks strangely from enunciating this specification, he everywhere works his formula so as to imply it in the clearest manner.

Influence on physical well-being or survival is his implied criterion of the rank of mental action. The moth which flies into the candle, instead of away from it, "fails," in Spencer's words (vol. I, p. 409), to "correspond" with its environment; but clearly, in this sense, pure cognitive inference of the existence of heat after a perception of light would not suffice to constitute correspondence; while a moth which, on feeling the light, should merely vaguely fear to approach it, but have no proper image of the heat, would "correspond." So that the Spencerian formula, to mean anything definite at all, must, at least, be re-written as follows: "Right or intelligent mental action consists in the establishment, corresponding to outward relations, of such inward relations and reactions as will favor the survival of the thinker, or, at least, his physical well-being."

Such a definition as this is precise, but at the

same time it is frankly teleological. It explicitly postulates a distinction between mental action pure and simple, and *right* mental action; and furthermore, it proposes, as criteria of this latter, certain ideal ends—those of physical prosperity or survival, which are pure *subjective interests* on the animal's part, brought with it upon the scene and corresponding to no relation already there.¹ No mental action is right or intelligent which fails to fit this standard. No correspondence can pass muster till it shows its subservience to these ends. Corresponding itself to no actual outward thing; referring merely to a future which *may* be, but which these interests now say *shall* be; purely ideal, in a word, they judge, dominate, determine all corre-

¹ These interests are the real *a priori* element in cognition. By saying that their pleasures and pains have nothing to do with correspondence, I mean simply this: To a large number of terms in the environment there may be inward correlatives of a neutral sort as regards feeling. The "correspondence" is already there. But, now, suppose some to be accented with pleasure, others with pain; that is a fact additional to the correspondence, a fact with no outward correlative. But it immediately orders the correspondences in this way: that the pleasant or interesting items are singled out, dwelt upon, developed into their farther connections, whilst the unpleasant or insipid ones are ignored or suppressed. The future of the Mind's development is thus mapped out in advance by the way in which the lines of pleasure and pain run. The interests precede the outer relations noticed. Take the utter absence of response of a dog or a savage to the greater mass of envioning relations. How can you alter it unless you previously *awaken an interest*—i.e., produce a susceptibility to intellectual pleasure in certain modes of cognitive exercise? Interests, then, are an all-essential factor which no writer pretending to give an account of mental evolution has a right to neglect.

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spondences between the inner and the outer. Which is as much as to say that *mere* correspondence with the outer world is a notion on which it is wholly impossible to base a definition of mental action. Mr. Spencer's occult reason for leaving unexpressed the most important part of the definition he works with probably lies in its apparent implication of subjective spontaneity. The mind, according to his philosophy, should be pure product, absolute derivative from the non-mental. To make it dictate conditions, bring independent interests into the game which may determine what we shall call correspondence, and what not, might, at first sight, appear contrary to the notion of evolution which forbids the introduction at any point of an absolutely new factor. In what sense the existence of survival interest does postulate such a factor we shall hereafter see. I think myself that it is possible to express all its outward results in non-mental terms. But the unedifying look of the thing, its simulation of an independent mental teleology, seems to have frightened Mr. Spencer here, as elsewhere, away from a serious scrutiny of the facts. But let us be indulgent to his timidity, and assume that survival was all the while a "mental reservation" with him, only excluded from his formula by reason of the comforting sound it might have to Philistine ears.

We should then have, as the embodiment of the highest ideal perfection of mental development, a creature of superb cognitive endowments, from

whose piercing perceptions no fact was too minute or too remote to escape; whose all-embracing foresight no contingency could find unprepared; whose invincible flexibility of resource no array of outward onslaught could overpower; but in whom all these gifts were swayed by the single passion of love of life, of survival at any price. This determination filling his whole energetic being, consciously realized, intensified by meditation, becomes a fixed idea, would use all the other faculties as its means, and, if they ever flagged, would by its imperious intensity spur them and hound them on to ever fresh exertions and achievements. There can be no doubt that, if such an incarnation of earthly prudence existed, a race of beings in whom this monotonously narrow passion for self-preservation were aided by every cognitive gift, they would soon be kings of all the earth. All known human races would wither before their breath, and be as dust beneath their conquering feet.

But whether any Spencerian would hail with hearty joy their advent is another matter. Certainly Mr. Spencer would not; while the common sense of mankind would stand aghast at the thought of them. Why does common opinion abhor such a being? Why does it crave greater "richness" of nature in its mental ideal? Simply because, to common sense, survival is only one out of many interests—*primus inter pares*, perhaps, but still in the midst of peers. What are these interests? Most men would reply that they are all that

makes survival worth securing. The social affections, all the various forms of play, the thrilling intimations of art, the delights of philosophic contemplation, the rest of religious emotion, the joy of moral self-approbation, the charm of fancy and of wit—some or all of these are absolutely required to make the notion of mere existence tolerable; and individuals who, by their special powers, satisfy these desires are protected by their fellows and enabled to survive, though their mental constitution should in other respects be lamentably ill-“adjusted” to the outward world. The story-teller, the musician, the theologian, the actor, or even the mere charming fellow, have never lacked means of support, however helpless they might individually have been to conform with those outward relations which we know as the powers of nature. The reason is very plain. To the individual man, as a social being, the interests of his fellow are a part of his environment. If his powers correspond to the wants of this social environment, he may survive, even though he be ill-adapted to the natural or “outer” environment. But these wants are pure subjective ideals, with nothing outward to correspond to them. So that, as far as the individual is concerned, it becomes necessary to modify Spencer’s survival formula still further, by introducing into the term environment a reference, not only to existent things¹, but also to ideal wants. It would have

[¹The word “non-existent” has been omitted as being due, apparently, to a misprint. Ed.]

to run in some such way as this: "Excellence of the individual mind consists in the establishment of inner relations more and more extensively conformed to the outward facts of nature, and to the ideal wants of the individual's fellows, but all of such a character as will promote survival or physical prosperity."

But here, again, common sense will meet us with an objection. Mankind desiderate certain qualities in the individual which are incompatible with his chance of survival being a maximum. Why do we all so eulogize and love the heroic, recklessly generous, and disinterested type of character? These qualities certainly imperil the survival of their possessor. The reason is very plain. Even if headlong courage, pride, and martyr-spirit do ruin the individual, they benefit the community as a whole whenever they are displayed by one of its members against a competing tribe. "It is death to you, but fun for us." Our interest in having the hero as he is, plays indirectly into the hands of our survival, though not of his.

This explicit acknowledgment of the survival interests of the tribe, as accounting for many interests in the individual which seem at first sight either unrelated to survival or at war with it, seems, after all, to bring back unity and simplicity into the Spencerian formula. Why, the Spencerian may ask, may not all the luxuriant foliage of ideal interests—æsthetic, philosophic, theologic, and the rest—which co-exist along with that of survival, be pres-

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ent in the tribe and so form part of the individual's environment, merely by virtue of the fact that they minister in an indirect way to the survival of the tribe as a whole? The disinterested scientific appetite of cognition, the sacred philosophic love of consistency, the craving for luxury and beauty, the passion for amusement, may all find their proper significance as processes of mind, strictly so-called, in the incidental utilitarian discoveries which flow from the energy they set in motion. Conscience, thoroughness, purity, love of truth, susceptibility to discipline, eager delight in fresh impressions, although none of them are traits of Intelligence *in se*, may thus be marks of a general mental energy, without which victory over nature and over other human competitors would be impossible. And, as victory means survival, and survival is the criterion of Intelligent "Correspondence," these qualities, though not expressed in the fundamental law of mind, may yet have been all the while understood by Mr. Spencer to form so many secondary consequences and corollaries of that law.

But here it is decidedly time to take our stand and refuse our aid in propping up Mr. Spencer's definition by any further good-natured translations and supplementary contributions of our own. It is palpable at a glance that a mind whose survival interest could only be adequately secured by such a wasteful array of energy squandered on side issues would be immeasurably inferior to one like that which we supposed a few pages back, in which

the monomania of tribal preservation should be the one all-devouring passion.

Surely there is nothing in the essence of intelligence which should oblige it forever to delude itself as to its own ends, and to strive towards a goal successfully only at the cost of consciously appearing to have far other aspirations in view.

A furnace which should produce along with its metal fifty different varieties of ash and slag, a planing-mill whose daily yield in shavings far exceeded that in boards, would rightly be pronounced inferior to one of the usual sort, even though more energy should be displayed in its working, and at moments some of that energy be directly effective. If ministry to survival be the sole criterion of mental excellence, then luxury and amusement, Shakespeare, Beethoven, Plato, and Marcus Aurelius, stellar spectroscopy, diatom markings, and nebular hypotheses are by-products on too wasteful a scale. The slag-heap is too big—it abstracts more energy than it contributes to the ends of the machine; and every serious evolutionist ought resolutely to bend his attention henceforward to the reduction in number and amount of these outlying interests, and the diversion of the energy they absorb into purely prudential channels.

Here, then, is our dilemma: One man may say that the law of mental development is dominated solely by the principle of conservation; another, that richness is the criterion of mental evolution; a third, that pure cognition of the actual is the es-

sence of worthy thinking—but who shall pretend to decide which is right? The umpire would have to bring a standard of his own upon the scene, which would be just as subjective and personal as the standards used by the contestants. And yet some standard there must be, if we are to attempt to define in any way the worth of different mental manifestations.

Is it not already clear to the reader's mind that the whole difficulty in making Mr. Spencer's law work lies in the fact that it is not really a constitutive, but a regulative, law of thought which he is erecting, and that he does not frankly say so? Every law of Mind must be either a law of the *cogitatum* or a law of the *cogitandum*. If it be a law in the sense of an analysis of what we *do* think, then it will include error, nonsense, the worthless as well as the worthy, metaphysics, and mythologies as well as scientific truths which mirror the actual environment. But such a law of the *cogitatum* is already well known. It is no other than the association of ideas according to their several modes; or, rather, it is this association definitively perfected by the inclusion of the teleological factor of interest by Mr. Hodgson in the fifth chapter of his masterly "Time and Space."

That Mr. Spencer, in the part of his work which we are considering, has no such law as this in view is evident from the fact that he has striven to give an original formulation to such a law in another part of his book, in that chapter, namely, on the

associability of relations, in the first volume, where the apperception of times and places, and the suppression of association by similarity, are made to explain the facts in a way whose operose ineptitude has puzzled many a simple reader.

Now, every living man would instantly define right thinking as thinking in correspondence with reality. But Spencer, in saying that right thought is that which conforms to existent outward relations, and this exclusively, undertakes to decide what the reality is. In other words, under cover of an apparently formal definition he really smuggles in a material definition of the most far-reaching import. For the Stoic, to whom *vivere convenienter naturæ* was also the law of mind, the reality was an archetypal Nature; for the Christian, whose mental law is to discover the will of God, and make one's actions correspond thereto, *that* is the reality. In fact, the philosophic problem which all the ages have been trying to solve in order to make thought in some way correspond with it, and which disbelievers in philosophy call insoluble, is just that: What is the reality? All the thinking, all the conflict of ideals, going on in the world at the present moment is in some way tributary to this quest. To attempt, therefore, with Mr. Spencer, to decide the matter merely incidentally, to forestall discussion by a definition—to carry the position by surprise, in a word—is a proceeding savoring more of piracy than philosophy. No, Spencer's definition of what we ought to think cannot be suffered to lurk in am-

bush ; it must stand out explicitly with the rest, and expect to be challenged and give an account of itself like any other ideal norm of thought.

We have seen how he seems to vacillate in his determination of it. At one time, "scientific" thought, mere passive mirroring of outward nature, purely registrative cognition ; at another time, thought in the exclusive service of survival, would seem to be his ideal. Let us consider the latter ideal first, since it has the polyp's authority in its favor : "We must survive—that end must regulate all our thought." The poor man who said to Talleyrand, "*Il faut bien que je vive!*" expressed it very well. But criticise this ideal, or transcend it as Talleyrand did by his cool reply, "*Je n'en vois pas la nécessité,*" and it can say nothing more for itself. *A priori* it is a mere brute teleological affirmation on a par with all others. Vainly you should hope to prove it to a person bent on suicide, who has but the one longing—to escape, to cease. Vainly you would argue with a Buddhist or a German pessimist, for they feel the full imperious strength of the desire, but have an equally profound persuasion of its essential wrongness and mendacity. Vainly, too, would you talk to a Christian, or even to any believer in the simple creed that the deepest meaning of the world is moral. For they hold that mere conformity with the outward—worldly success and survival—is not the absolute and exclusive end. In the *failures* to "adjust"—in the rubbish-heap, according to Spencer—lies, for them, the real key to the truth—the

sole mission of life being to teach that the outward actual is not the whole of being.

And now—if, falling back on the scientific ideal, you say that to *know* is the one τέλος of intelligence—not only will the inimitable Turkish cadi in Layard's Nineveh praise God in your face that he seeks not that which he requires not, and ask, "Will much knowledge create thee a double belly?"—not only may I, if it please me, legitimately refuse to stir from my fool's paradise of theosophy and mysticism, in spite of all your calling (since, after all, your true knowledge and my pious feeling have alike nothing to back them save their seeming good to our respective personalities)—not only this, but to the average sense of mankind, whose ideal of mental nature is best expressed by the word "richness," your statistical and cognitive intelligence will seem insufferably narrow, dry, tedious, and unacceptable.

The truth appears to be that every individual man may, if it please him, set up his private categorical imperative of what rightness or excellence in thought shall consist in, and these different ideals, instead of entering upon the scene armed with a warrant—whether derived from the polyp or from a transcendental source—appear only as so many brute affirmations left to fight it out upon the chess-board among themselves. They are, at best, postulates, each of which must depend on the general consensus of experience as a whole to bear out its validity. The formula which proves to have the

most massive destiny will be the true one. But this is a point which can only be solved *ambulando*, and not by any *a priori* definition. The attempt to forestall the decision is free to all to make, but all make it at their risk. Our respective hypotheses and postulates help to shape the course of thought, but the only thing which we all agree in assuming is, that thought will be coerced away from them if they are wrong. If Spencer to-day says, "Bow to the actual," whilst Swinburne spurns "compromise with the nature of things," I exclaim, "*Fiat justitia, pereat mundus*," and Mill says, "To hell I will go, rather than 'adjust' myself to an evil God," what umpire can there be between us but the future? The idealists and the empiricists confront each other like Guelphs and Ghibellines, but each alike waits for adoption, as it were, by the course of events.

In other words, we are all fated to be *a priori* teleologists whether we will or not. Interests which we bring with us, and simply posit or take our stand upon, are the very flour out of which our mental dough is kneaded. The organism of thought, from the vague dawn of discomfort or ease in the polyp to the intellectual joy of Laplace among his formulas, is teleological through and through. Not a cognition occurs but feeling is there to comment on it, to stamp it as of greater or less worth. Spencer and Plato are *ejusdem farinae*. To attempt to hoodwink teleology out of sight by saying nothing about it, is the vainest of procedures. Spencer merely takes sides with the *τέλος* he happens to

prefer, whether it be that of physical well-being or that of cognitive registration. He represents a particular teleology. Well might teleology (had she a voice) exclaim with Emerson's Brahma:

"If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass and turn again.

.

"They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt," etc.

But now a scientific man, feeling something uncanny in this omnipresence of a teleological factor dictating *how* the mind shall correspond—an interest seemingly tributary to nothing non-mental—may ask us what we meant by saying sometime back that in one sense it is perfectly possible to express the existence of interests in non-mental terms. We meant simply this: That the reactions or outward consequences of the interests could be so expressed. The interest of survival which has hitherto been treated as an ideal *should-be*, presiding from the start and marking out the way in which an animal must react, is, from an outward and physical point of view, nothing more than an objective future implication of the reaction (if it occurs) as an actual fact. If the animal's brain acts fortuitously in the right way, he survives. His young do the same. The reference to survival in no way preceded or conditioned the intelligent act;

but the fact of survival was merely bound up with it as an incidental consequence, and may, therefore, be called accidental, rather than instrumental, to the production of intelligence. It is the same with all other interests. They are pleasures and pains incidentally implied in the workings of the nervous mechanism, and, therefore, in their ultimate origin, non-mental; for the idiosyncrasies of our nervous centres are mere "spontaneous variations," like any of those which form the ultimate data for Darwin's theory. A brain which functions so as to insure survival may, therefore, be called intelligent in no other sense than a tooth, a limb, or a stomach, which should serve the same end—the sense, namely, of appropriate; as when we say "that is an intelligent device," meaning a device fitted to secure a certain end which we assume. If *nirvana* were the end, instead of survival, then it is true the means would be different, but in both cases alike the end would not precede the means, or even be coeval with them, but depend utterly upon them, and follow them in point of time. The fox's cunning and the hare's speed are thus alike creations of the non-mental. The τέλος they entail is no more an agent in one case than another, since in both alike it is a resultant. Spencer, then, seems justified in not admitting it to appear as an irreducible ultimate factor of Mind, any more than of Body.

This position is perfectly unassailable so long as one describes the phenomena in this manner from without. The τέλος in that case can only be hypo-

thetically, not imperatively, stated: *if* such and such be the end, then such brain functions are the most intelligent, just as such and such digestive functions are the most appropriate. But such and such cannot be declared *as* the end, except by the commenting mind of an outside spectator. The organs themselves, in their working at any instant, cannot but be supposed indifferent as to what product they are destined fatally to bring forth, cannot be imagined whilst fatally producing one result to have at the same time a notion of a different result which should be their truer end, but which they are unable to secure.

Nothing can more strikingly show, it seems to me, the essential difference between the point of view of consciousness and that of outward existence. We can describe the latter only in teleological terms, hypothetically, or else by the addition of a supposed contemplating mind which measures what it sees going on by its private teleological standard, and judges it intelligent. But consciousness itself is not merely intelligent in this sense. It is *intelligent intelligence*. It seems both to supply the means and the standard by which they are measured. It not only *serves* a final purpose, but *brings* a final purpose—posits, declares it. This purpose is not a mere hypothesis—"if survival is to occur, then brain must so perform," etc.—but an imperative decree: "Survival *shall* occur, and, therefore, brain *must* so perform!" It seems hopelessly impossible to formulate anything of this sort in non-

mental terms, and this is why I must still contend that the phenomena of subjective "interest," as soon as the animal consciously realizes the latter, appears upon the scene as an absolutely new factor, which we can only suppose to be latent thitherto in the physical environment by crediting the physical atoms, etc., each with a consciousness of its own, approving or condemning its motions.

This, then, must be our conclusion: That no law of the *cogitandum*, no normative receipt for excellence in thinking, can be authoritatively promulgated. The only formal canon that we can apply to mind which is unassailable is the barren truism that it must think rightly. We can express this in terms of correspondence by saying that thought must correspond with truth; but whether that truth be actual or ideal is left undecided.

We have seen that the invocation of the polyp to decide for us that it is actual (apart from the fact that he does not decide in that way) is based on a principle which refutes itself if consistently carried out. Spencer's formula has crumbled into utter worthlessness in our hands, and we have nothing to replace it by except our several individual hypotheses, convictions, and beliefs. Far from being vouched for by the past, these are verified only by the future. They are all of them, in some sense, laws of the ideal. They have to keep house together, and the weakest goes to the wall. The survivors constitute the right way of thinking. While the issue is still undecided, we can only call

them our prepossessions. But, decided or not, "go in" we each must for one set of interests or another. The question for each of us in the battle of life is, "Can we *come out* with it?" Some of these interests admit to-day of little dispute. Survival, physical well-being, and undistorted cognition of what is, will hold their ground. But it is truly strange to see writers like Messrs. Huxley and Clifford, who show themselves able to call most things in question, unable, when it comes to the interest of cognition, to touch it with their solvent doubt. They assume some mysterious imperative laid upon the mind, declaring that the infinite ascertainment of facts is its supreme duty, which he who evades is a blasphemer and child of shame. And yet these authors can hardly have failed to reflect, at some moment or other, that the disinterested love of information, and still more the love of consistency in thought (that true scientific *æstrus*), and the ideal fealty to Truth (with a capital T), are all so many particular forms of æsthetic interest, late in their evolution, arising in conjunction with a vast number of similar æsthetic interests, and bearing with them no *a priori* mark of being worthier than these. If we may doubt one, we may doubt all. How shall I say that knowing fact with Messrs. Huxley and Clifford is a better use to put my mind to than feeling good with Messrs. Moody and Sankey, unless by slowly and painfully finding out that in the long run it works best?

I, for my part, cannot escape the consideration, forced upon me at every turn, that the knower is not simply a mirror floating with no foot-hold anywhere, and passively reflecting an order that he comes upon and finds simply existing. The knower is an actor, and co-efficient of the truth on one side, whilst on the other he registers the truth which he helps to create. Mental interests, hypotheses, postulates, so far as they are bases for human action—action which to a great extent transforms the world—help to *make* the truth which they declare. In other words, there belongs to mind, from its birth upward, a spontaneity, a vote. It is in the game, and not a mere looker-on; and its judgments of the *should-be*, its ideals, cannot be peeled off from the body of the *cogitandum* as if they were excrescences, or meant, at most, survival. We know so little about the ultimate nature of things, or of ourselves, that it would be sheer folly dogmatically to say that an ideal rational order may not be real. The only objective criterion of reality is coerciveness, in the long run, over thought. Objective facts, Spencer's outward relations, are real only because they coerce sensation. Any interest which should be coercive on the same massive scale would be *eodem jure* real. By its very essence, the reality of a thought is proportionate to the way it grasps us. Its intensity, its seriousness—its interest, in a word—taking these qualities, not at any given instant, but as shown by the total upshot of experience. If judgments of the *should-be* are fated to grasp us in

this way, they are what "correspond." The ancients placed the conception of Fate at the bottom of things—deeper than the gods themselves. "The fate of thought," utterly barren and indeterminate as such a formula is, is the only unimpeachable regulative Law of Mind.

IX

QUELQUES CONSIDÉRATIONS SUR LA MÉTHODE SUBJECTIVE ¹

[1878]

AUX RÉDACTEURS DE LA *Critique philosophique*

Messieurs,

Depuis longtemps déjà, quand des idées noires, pessimisme, fatalisme, etc., me viennent obséder, j'ai l'habitude de m'en débarrasser par un raisonnement fort simple, et tellement d'accord avec les principes de la philosophie à laquelle votre revue est consacrée, que je m'étonne presque de ne l'avoir pas encore rencontré *totidem verbis* dans quelqu'un de vos cahiers hebdomadaires. J'ose vous le soumettre.

Il s'agit de savoir *si l'on est en droit de repousser une théorie confirmée en apparence par un nombre très-considérable de faits objectifs, uniquement parce qu'elle ne répond point à nos préférences intérieures.*

[¹ Reprinted from *Critique Philosophique*, 1878, 6me année, 2, 407-413. The present article is a brief preliminary statement of matters afterwards discussed in "Rationality, Activity and Faith," first published in the *Princeton Review* in 1882, and later reprinted in the *Will to Believe*. Cf. below, p. 83, note. The early date of the composition of this communication, and its flattering reception by Renouvier, show that James's interests and fame were from the beginning of his career identified with that philosophical tendency which culminated in his *Pragmatism*. See above, p. 43, note. Ed.]

On n'a pas ce droit, nous disent les hommes qui cultivent aujourd'hui les sciences, ou du moins presque tous, et tous les positivistes. Repousser une conclusion par ce seul motif qu'elle contrarie nos sentiments intimes et nos désirs, c'est faire emploi de la méthode subjective; et la méthode subjective, à les en croire, est le péché originel de la science, la racine de toutes les erreurs scientifiques. Suivant eux, loin d'aller où le portent ses attrait, l'homme qui cherche la vérité doit se réduire à la simple condition d'instrument enregistreur, faire de sa conscience de savant une sorte de feuille blanche et de surface morte, sur laquelle la réalité extérieure viendrait se retracer sans altération ni courbure.

Je nie absolument la légitimité d'un tel parti pris chez ceux qui prétendent le poser en règle universelle de la méthode. Cette règle est bonne à appliquer à un ordre de recherches, mais elle est dénuée de valeur, elle est même absurde, dans un autre ordre de vérités à trouver. Rejeter rigoureusement la méthode subjective partout où la vérité existe en dehors de mon action et se détermine avec certitude indépendamment de tout ce que je peux désirer ou craindre, rien de plus sage. Ainsi, les faits acquis de l'histoire, les mouvements futurs des astres sont dès maintenant déterminés, soit qu'ils me plaisent ou non comme ils sont ou seront. Mes préférences ici sont impuissantes à produire ou à modifier les choses et ne pourraient qu'obscurcir mon jugement. Je dois résolument leur imposer silence.

Mais il est une classe de faits dont la matière n'est

point ainsi constituée ou fixée d'avance,—des faits qui ne sont pas *donnés*.—Je fais une ascension alpestre. Je me trouve dans un mauvais pas dont je ne peux sortir que par un saut hardi et dangereux, et ce saut, je voudrais le pouvoir faire, mais j'ignore, faute d'expérience, si j'en aurai la force. Supposons que j'emploie la méthode subjective : je crois ce que je désire ; ma confiance me donne des forces et rend possible ce qui, sans elle, ne l'eût peut-être pas été. Je franchis donc l'espace et me voilà hors de danger. Mais supposons que je sois disposé à nier ma capacité, par ce motif qu'elle ne m'a pas encore été démontrée par ce genre d'exploits : alors je balance, j'hésite, et tant et tant qu'à la fin, affaibli et tremblant, réduit à prendre un élan de pur désespoir, je manque mon coup et je tombe dans l'abîme. En pareil cas, quoi qu'il en puisse advenir, je ne serai qu'un sot si je ne crois pas ce que je désire, car ma croyance se trouve être une condition préliminaire, indispensable de l'accomplissement de son objet qu'elle affirme. Croyant à mes forces, je m'élance ; le résultat donne raison à ma croyance, la *vérifie* ; c'est alors seulement qu'elle *devient vraie*, mais alors on peut dire aussi qu'elle *était vraie*. Il y a donc des cas où *une croyance crée sa propre vérification*. Ne croyez pas, vous aurez raison ; et, en effet, vous tomberez dans l'abîme. Croyez, vous aurez encore raison, car vous vous sauverez. Toute la différence entre les deux cas, c'est que le second vous est fort avantageux.

Dès que j'admets qu'une certaine alternative

existe, et que l'option pour moi n'est possible qu'à ce prix que je veuille fournir une contribution personnelle; dès que je reconnais que cette contribution personnelle dépend d'un certain degré d'énergie subjective, qui lui-même a besoin, pour se réaliser, d'un certain degré de foi dans le résultat, et qu'ainsi l'avenir possible repose sur la croyance actuelle, je dois voir en quelle absurdité profonde je tomberais en voulant bannir la méthode subjective, la foi de l'esprit. Sur l'existence actuelle de cette foi, la possibilité de l'avenir se fonde. Cette foi peut tromper, très-bien. Les efforts dont elle me rend capable peuvent ne pas aboutir à créer un ordre de choses qu'elle entrevoit et voudrait déterminer; voilà qui est dit. Eh bien! ma vie est manquée, c'est indubitable; mais la vie de M. Huxley, par exemple, —de M. Huxley, qui écrivait dernièrement: "Croire parce qu'on voudrait croire serait faire preuve de la dernière immoralité",—cette vie ne serait-elle pas tout aussi manquée, s'il se trouvait par hasard que la croyance qu'il voudrait proscrire comme dénuée de garantie objective fût en définitive la vraie!

Le cas est toujours possible. Quoi qu'on fasse, en ce jeu qu'on appelle la vie, qu'on croie, qu'on doute, qu'on nie, on est également exposé à perdre. Est-ce une raison pour ne pas jouer? Non, évidemment; mais puisque ce qu'on perd est une quantité fixe (on ne fait après tout que payer de sa personne), c'est une raison de s'assurer, par tous les moyens légitimes qu'on a, qu'au cas que l'on gagne,

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le gain soit un maximum. Si, par exemple, on peut, en croyant, augmenter le grand bien qu'on poursuit, le prix possible, voilà une raison de croire.

Or, il en est précisément ainsi touchant plusieurs de ces questions universelles, qui sont les problèmes de la philosophie. Prenons celle du pessimisme. Sans être arrivé partout à l'état de dogme philosophique, comme nous le voyons en Allemagne, le pessimisme pose à tout penseur un sérieux problème : A quoi bon la vie ? ou, comme on dit vulgairement, le jeu en vaut-il la chandelle ? Si on prend parti pour la réponse pessimiste, que gagne-t-on à avoir raison ? Pas grand'chose, assurément. Au contraire, on gagne un maximum, au cas qu'on ait raison en décidant en faveur de l'opinion qui tient que le monde est bon. Que pouvons-nous faire pour que ce monde soit bon ? y contribuer de notre part ; et comment une contribution minime peut-elle changer la valeur d'un total si grand ? en ce qu'elle est d'une *qualité* incomparablement supérieure. Telle est la qualité des faits de la vie morale.

Soit M la masse des faits indépendants de moi, et soit r ma réaction propre, le contingent des faits qui dérivent de mon activité personnelle. M contient, nous le savons, une somme immense de phénomènes de besoin, misère, vieillesse, douleur, et de choses faites pour inspirer le dégoût et l'effroi. Il se pourrait alors que r se produisît comme une réaction du désespoir, fût un acte de suicide, par exemple, $M + r$, la totalité avec ce qui me concerne, représenterait donc un état de choses mauvais de

tout point. Nul rayon dans cette nuit. Le pessimisme, dans cette hypothèse, se trouve parachevé par mon acte lui-même, dérive de ma croyance. Le voilà fait, et j'avais raison de l'affirmer.

Supposons, au contraire, que le sentiment du mal contenu dans *M*, au lieu de me décourager, n'ait fait qu'accroître ma résistance intérieure. Cette fois ma réaction sera l'opposé du désespoir; *r* contiendra patience, courage, dévouement, foi à l'invisible, toutes les vertus héroïques et les joies qui découlent de ces vertus. Or, c'est un fait d'expérience, et l'empirisme ne peut le contester, que de telles joies sont d'une valeur incomparable auprès des jouissances purement passives qui se trouvent exclues par le fait de la constitution de *M* telle qu'elle est. Si donc il est vrai que le bonheur moral est le plus grand bonheur actuellement connu; si, d'autre part, la constitution de *M*, par le mal qu'il contient et la réaction qu'il provoque, est la condition de ce bonheur, n'est-il pas clair que *M* est au moins *susceptible* d'appartenir au meilleur des mondes? Je dis *susceptible* seulement, parce que tout dépend du caractère de *r*. *M* en soi est ambigu, capable, selon le complément qu'il recevra, de figurer dans un pessimisme ou dans un optimisme moral.¹

¹ Il est clair qu'il ne faut pas donner ici à ce mot *optimisme* le sens qu'il a reçu par rapport aux questions de théodicée, ou celui qu'on y attache dans la philosophie de l'histoire: sens que résument les propositions: *Tout est bien, Tout est nécessaire*. Mais le *pessimisme* signifiant ci-dessus la doctrine du *Tout est mal*, on entend sans doute ici par l'*optimisme* non pas le *contraire logique*, mais simplement le *contradictoire logique* (pour employer les termes de l'École) de cette doctrine; à savoir non

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Il fera difficilement partie d'un optimisme, si nous perdons notre énergie morale; il *pourra* en faire partie, si nous la conservons. Mais comment la conserver, à moins de croire à la possibilité d'une réussite, à moins de compter sur l'avenir et de se dire: Ce monde *est bon*, puisque, au point de vue moral, il est *ce que je le fais*, et que je le ferai bon? En un mot, comment exclure de la *connaissance* du fait la méthode subjective, alors que cette méthode est le propre instrument de la production du fait?

En toute proposition dont la portée est universelle, il faut que les actes du sujet et leurs suites sans fin soient renfermés d'avance dans la formule. Telle doit être l'extension de la formule $M + r$, dès qu'on la prend pour représenter le monde. Ceci posé, nos vœux, nos souhaits étant des coefficients réels du terme r , soit en eux-mêmes, soit par les croyances qu'ils nous inspirent ou, si l'on veut, par les hypothèses qu'ils nous suggèrent, on doit avouer que ces croyances engendrent une partie au moins de la vérité qu'elles affirment. Telles croyances, tels faits; d'autres croyances, d'autres faits. Et notons bien que tout ceci est indépendant de la question de la liberté absolue ou du déterminisme absolu. Si nos faits sont déterminés, c'est que nos croyances le sont aussi; mais déterminées ou non que soient ces dernières, elles sont une condition phénoménale nécessairement préalable aux faits,

pas que tout est bien, mais qu'il est faux que tout soit mal, qu'il y a du bien, que le monde *peut être bon*. Au delà les questions subsistent. (Note de la *Critique philosophique*.)

nécessairement constitutive, par conséquent, de la vérité que nous cherchons à connaître.

Voilà donc la méthode subjective justifiée logiquement, pourvu qu'on en limite convenablement l'emploi. Elle ne serait que pernicieuse, et il faut même dire immorale, appliquée à des cas où les faits à formuler ne renfermeraient pas comme facteur le terme subjectif *r*. Mais partout où entre un tel facteur, l'application en est légitime. Prenons encore ce problème pour exemple :

La nature intime du monde est-elle morale, ou le monde n'est-il qu'un pur fait, une simple existence actuelle? C'est au fond la question du matérialisme. Les positivistes objecteront qu'une question pareille est insoluble, ou même irrationnelle, attendu que la nature intime du monde, existât-elle, n'est pas un phénomène et ne peut en conséquence être vérifiée. Je réponds que toute question a un sens et se pose nettement, de laquelle résulte une claire alternative pratique, en telle sorte que, selon qu'on y réponde d'une manière ou d'une autre, on doive adopter une conduite ou une autre. Or, c'est le cas : le matérialiste et celui qui affirme une nature morale du monde devront agir différemment l'un de l'autre en bien des circonstances. Le matérialiste, quand les faits ne concordent pas avec ses sentiments moraux, est toujours maître de sacrifier ces derniers. Le jugement qu'il porte sur un fait, en tant que *bon* ou *mauvais*, est relatif à sa constitution psychique et en dépend ; mais cette constitution n'étant elle-même qu'un fait et *une donnée*,

n'est en soi ni bonne ni mauvaise. Il est donc permis de la modifier,—d'engourdir, par exemple, le sentiment moral à l'aide de toutes sortes de moyens,—et de changer ainsi le jugement, en transformant la donnée de laquelle il dérive. Au contraire, celui qui croit à la nature morale intime du monde, estime que les attributs de bien et de mal conviennent à tous les phénomènes et s'appliquent aux données psychiques aussi bien qu'aux faits relatifs à ces données. Il ne saurait donc songer, comme à une chose toute simple, à fausser ses sentiments. Ses sentiments eux-mêmes *doivent*, selon lui, être d'une manière et non d'une autre.

D'un côté donc, résistance au mal, pauvreté acceptée, martyre s'il le faut, la vie tragique, en un mot; de l'autre, les concessions, les accommodements, les capitulations de conscience et la vie épicurienne; tel est le partage entre les deux croyances. Observons seulement que leurs divergences ne se marquent avec force qu'aux moments décisifs et critiques de la vie, quand l'insuffisance des maximes journalières oblige de recourir aux grands principes. Là, la contradiction éclate. L'un dit: Le monde est chose sérieuse, partout et toujours, et il y a fondements pour le jugement moral. L'autre, le matérialiste, répond: Qu'importe comment je juge, puisque *vanitas vanitatum* est le fond de tout? Le dernier mot de la sagesse aux abois, pour celui-ci, c'est *anesthésie*; pour celui-là, *énergie*.

On voit que le problème a un sens, puisqu'il comporte deux solutions contradictoires dans la

pratique de la vie. Comment savoir à présent quelle solution est la bonne? Mais comment un savant sait-il si son hypothèse est la bonne? Il la prend pour bonne et il procède aux déductions, il agit en conséquence de ce qu'il a posé. Tôt ou tard les suites de son activité le détromperont, si son point de départ a été pris faussement. N'en est-il pas ici de même? Nous avons toujours affaire à $M+r$. Si M , en sa *nature intime*, est moral et que r soit fourni par un matérialiste, ces deux éléments sont en désaccord et ils iront s'écartant de plus en plus l'un de l'autre. La même divergence devra s'accuser au cas que l'agent règle sa conduite sur la croyance que le monde est un fait moral, et que le monde, en réalité, ne soit qu'un fait brut, une somme de phénomènes tout matériels. Des deux parts, il y a attente trompée; d'où la nécessité d'hypothèses subsidiaires, et de plus en plus compliquées, comme celles dont l'histoire de l'astronomie nous fournit un exemple dans la multiplicité des épicycles qu'on dut imaginer pour faire cadrer les faits de mieux en mieux observés avec le système de Ptolémée. Si donc le partisan du monde moral, en sa croyance, s'est déterminé pour l'hypothèse fausse, il éprouvera une suite de mécomptes et n'arrivera pas définitivement à la paix du cœur; il restera inconsolé dans ses peines; son choix *tragique* ne sera pas justifié.

Dans le cas contraire, $M+r$ formant une harmonie et non plus un assemblage d'éléments disparates, le temps irait confirmant l'hypothèse, et l'agent qui l'aurait embrassée aurait toujours plus de raisons

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de se féliciter de son choix : il nagerait pour ainsi dire à pleines voiles dans la destinée qu'il se serait faite.

Le moyen est donc le même ici que dans les sciences, de prouver qu'une opinion est fondée, et nous n'en connaissons pas d'autre. Observons seulement que, selon les questions, le temps requis pour la vérification varie. Telle hypothèse, en physique, sera vérifiée au bout d'une demi-heure. Une hypothèse comme celle du transformisme demandera plus d'une génération pour s'établir solidement, et des hypothèses d'un ordre universel, telles que celles dont nous parlons, pourront rester sujettes au doute pendant bien des siècles encore. Mais en attendant il faut agir, et pour agir il faut choisir son hypothèse. Le doute même équivaut souvent à un choix actif. Du moment qu'on est obligé d'opter, il n'y a rien de plus rationnel que de donner sa préférence à celui des partis à prendre pour lequel on se sent le plus d'attrait, quitte ensuite à se voir démenti et condamné par la nature des choses si l'on a mal jugé. Au résumé *foi et working hypothesis* sont ici la même chose. Avec le temps, la vérité se dévoilera.

Je peux aller plus loin. Je demande pourquoi le matérialisme et la croyance en un monde moral ne seraient pas *l'un comme l'autre vérifiables* de la manière que je viens de dire? Qu'est-ce, en d'autres termes, qui empêche que *M* ne soit essentiellement ambigu et n'attende de son complément *r* la détermination ultime qui le fera ou rentrer

dans un système moral ou se réduire à un système de faits bruts?

Le cas est concevable. Telle ligne peut faire partie d'un nombre infini de courbes, tel mot peut entrer dans beaucoup de phrases différentes. Si nous avons affaire à un cas de ce genre, il pourrait dépendre de *r* de faire pencher la balance en un sens ou en l'autre. Agissons, je suppose, en nous inspirant de la croyance en l'univers moral : cette vérité que le monde est chose très-sérieuse éclatera chaque jour davantage. Au contraire, agissons en matérialistes, et la suite des temps montrera de plus en plus que le monde est chose frivole et que *vanitas vanitatum* est bien le fond de tout. Ainsi le monde sera ce que nous le ferons.

Et qu'on ne me dise pas qu'une chose infime telle que *r* ne saurait changer du tout au tout le caractère de *M*, cette masse immense. Une simple particule négative renverse bien le sens des plus longues phrases ! Si l'on avait à définir l'univers au point de vue de la sensibilité, il faudrait ne regarder qu'au seul règne animal, pourtant si pauvre comme fait *quantitatif*. La définition *morale* du monde pourrait dépendre de phénomènes plus restreints encore. Croyons à ce monde-là : les fruits de notre croyance remédieront aux défauts qui l'empêchaient d'être. Croyons qu'il n'est qu'une idée vaine, et en effet il sera vain. La méthode subjective est ainsi légitime en pratique et en théorie.

J'ai déjà remarqué qu'il n'était pas question de liberté absolue dans les exemples que j'ai pris.

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Cette liberté peut être ou n'être pas réellement. Mais si des actes libres sont possibles, ils peuvent se produire et devenir plus fréquents, grâce à la méthode subjective. En effet, la foi en leur possibilité augmente l'énergie morale qui les suscite. Mais parler de liberté dans la *Critique philosophique*, c'est porter de l'or en Californie. J'aime donc mieux finir et me résumer en disant que je crois avoir montré dans la méthode subjective autre chose que le procédé qualifié de honteux par un étrange abus de l'esprit soi-disant scientifique. Il faut passer outre à cette espèce de proscription, à ce veto ridicule qui, si nous voulions nous y conformer, paralyserait deux de nos plus essentielles facultés : celle de nous proposer, en vertu d'un acte de croyance, un but qui ne peut être atteint que par nos propres efforts, et celle de nous porter courageusement à l'action dans les cas où le succès ne nous est pas assuré d'avance.

Croyez, messieurs, à la sympathie très-particulière avec laquelle je suis, votre tout dévoué,

WM. JAMES.

Harvard College, Cambridge (Mass.), États-Unis
d'Amérique, 20 nov. 1877.

¹ L'auteur du très-remarquable article qu'on vient de lire fait à la *Critique philosophique* beaucoup

[¹ This note, as well as that above on p. 74, was presumably written by Charles Renouvrier, who was at this time editor of the *Critique Philosophique*. Cf. above, p. 26, note. Ed.]

d'honneur en voulant bien s'étonner de ce qu'il n'a pas encore rencontré l'expression de ses propres pensées *totidem verbis* dans nos pages. Il est vrai qu'elles sont en tout conformes à la méthode critique et nous nous estimerions heureux de pouvoir les signer. Mais la manière dont elles sont présentées, la forme originale du raisonnement et la saveur à la fois délicate et forte des leçons données à la fausse science par un homme qui est fort au courant de la vraie, impriment un réel cachet de personnalité à cette justification de la "méthode subjective." Nous sommes bien sûrs que nos lecteurs seront de notre avis, fussent-ils faire leurs réserves sur un point ou sur un autre, ou plutôt réclamer des éclaircissements qui parfois ne seraient pas de trop. Quant à nous, nous ne manquerons pas de reprendre ce grand sujet et d'essayer d'ajouter aux ingénieuses démonstrations de M. Wm. James, quelques-uns des nombreux commentaires qu'elles sont de nature à appeler.

X

THE SENTIMENT OF RATIONALITY ¹

[1879]

I

WHAT is the task which philosophers set themselves to perform? And why do they philosophise at all? Almost every one will immediately reply: They desire to attain a conception of the frame of things which shall on the whole be more rational than the rather fragmentary and chaotic one which everyone by gift of nature carries about with him under his hat. But suppose this rational conception attained by the philosopher, how is he to recognise it for what it is, and not let it slip through ignorance? The only answer can be that he will recognise its rationality as he recognises everything else, by certain subjective marks with which it af-

[¹ Reprinted from *Mind*, 1879, 4, 317-346. It was translated into French with a note of tribute by C. Renouvier, in *Critique Philosophique*, 1879, 8me année, 2, 72-89; 113-118; 129-136. Portions were combined with "Rationality, Activity and Faith" (*Princeton Review*, 1882, 2, 58-86) to form the essay entitled "The Sentiment of Rationality" in *The Will to Believe and other Essays* (1897). For the bearing of this present essay on James's general plan, cf. the author's note on p. 136, below. The statement of instrumentalism on pp. 86-88 below was reprinted as a note in the *Principles of Psychology* (1890), 2, pp. 335-336. Pencilled corrections by the author made in the copy of *Mind* belonging to the Harvard College Library have been adopted in the present reprinting. Ed.]

fects him. When he gets the marks he may know that he has got the rationality.

What then are the marks? A strong feeling of ease, peace, rest, is one of them. The transition from a state of puzzle and perplexity to rational comprehension is full of lively relief and pleasure.

But this relief seems to be a negative rather than a positive character. Shall we then say that the feeling of rationality is constituted merely by the absence of any feeling of irrationality? I think there are very good grounds for upholding such a view. All feeling whatever, in the light of certain recent psychological speculations, seems to depend for its physical condition not on simple discharge of nerve-currents, but on their discharge under arrest, impediment or resistance. Just as we feel no particular pleasure when we breathe freely, but a very intense feeling of distress when the respiratory motions are prevented; so any unobstructed tendency to action discharges itself without the production of much cogitative accompaniment, and any perfectly fluent course of thought awakens but little feeling. But when the movement is inhibited or when the thought meets with difficulties, we experience a distress which yields to an opposite feeling of pleasure as fast as the obstacle is overcome. It is only when the distress is upon us that we can be said to strive, to crave, or to aspire. When enjoying plenary freedom to energise either in the way of motion or of thought, we are in a sort of anæsthetic state in which we might say with Walt

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Whitman, if we cared to say anything about ourselves at such times, "I am sufficient as I am". This feeling of the sufficiency of the present moment, of its absoluteness—this absence of all need to explain it, account for it or justify it—is what I call the Sentiment of Rationality. As soon, in short, as we are enabled from any cause whatever to think of a thing with perfect fluency, that thing seems to us rational.

Why we should constantly gravitate towards the attainment of such fluency cannot here be said. As this is not an ethical but a psychological essay, it is quite sufficient for our purposes to lay it down as an empirical fact that we strive to formulate rationally a tangled mass of fact by a propensity as natural and invincible as that which makes us exchange a hard high stool for an arm-chair or prefer travelling by railroad to riding in a springless cart.

Whatever modes of conceiving the cosmos facilitate this fluency of our thought, produce the sentiment of rationality. Conceived in such modes Being vouches for itself and needs no further philosophic formulation. But so long as mutually obstructive elements are involved in the conception, the pent-up irritated mind recoiling on its present consciousness will criticise it, worry over it, and never cease in its attempts to discover some new mode of formulation which may give it escape from the irrationality of its actual ideas.

Now mental ease and freedom may be obtained in various ways. Nothing is more familiar than the

way in which mere custom makes us at home with ideas or circumstances which, when new, filled the mind with curiosity and the need of explanation. There is no more common sight than that of men's mental worry about things incongruous with personal desire, and their thoughtless incurious acceptance of whatever happens to harmonise with their subjective ends. The existence of evil forms a "mystery"—a "problem": there is no "problem of happiness". But, on the other hand, purely theoretic processes may produce the same mental peace which custom and congruity with our native impulses in other cases give; and we have forthwith to discover how it is that so many processes can produce the same result, and how Philosophy, by emulating or using the means of all, may attain to a conception of the world which shall be rational in the maximum degree, or be warranted in the most composite manner against the inroads of mental unrest or discontent.

II

It will be best to take up first the theoretic way. The facts of the world in their sensible diversity are always before us, but the philosophic need craves that they should be conceived in such a way as to satisfy the sentiment of rationality. The philosophic quest then is the quest of a conception. What now is a *conception*? It is a *teleological instrument*. It is a partial aspect of a thing which *for our purpose* we regard as its essen-

tial aspect, as the representative of the entire thing. In comparison with this aspect, whatever other properties and qualities the thing may have, are unimportant accidents which we may without blame ignore. But the essence, the ground of conception, varies with the end we have in view. A substance like oil has as many different essences as it has uses to different individuals. One man conceives it as a combustible, another as a lubricator, another as a food; the chemist thinks of it as a hydro-carbon; the furniture-maker as a darkener of wood; the speculator as a commodity whose market price to-day is this and to-morrow that. The soap-boiler, the physicist, the clothes-scourer severally ascribe to it other essences in relation to their needs. Ueberweg's doctrine¹ that the essential quality of a thing is the quality of most *worth*, is strictly true; but Ueberweg has failed to note that the worth is wholly relative to the temporary interests of the conceiver. And, even, when his interest is distinctly defined in his own mind, the discrimination of the quality in the object which has the closest connexion with it, is a thing which no rules can teach. The only *a priori* advice that can be given to a man embarking on life with a certain purpose is the somewhat barren counsel: Be sure that in the circumstances that meet you, you attend to the *right* ones for your purpose. To pick out the right ones is the measure of the man. "Millions," says Hartmann, "stare at the phenome-

¹ *Logic*, English tr., p. 189.

non before a *genialer Kopf* pounces on the concept."¹ The genius is simply he to whom, when he opens his eyes upon the world, the "right" characters are the prominent ones. The fool is he who, with the same purposes as the genius, infallibly gets his attention tangled amid the accidents.

Schopenhauer expresses well this ultimate truth when he says that Intuition (by which in this passage he means the power to distinguish at a glance the essence amid the accidents) "is not only the source of all knowledge, but is knowledge κατ' ἐξοχήν . . . is real *insight*. . . . *Wisdom*, the true view of life, the right look at things, and the judgment that hits the mark, proceed from the mode in which the man conceives the world which lies before him. . . . He who excels in this talent knows the (Platonic) ideas of the world and of life. Every case he looks at stands for countless cases; more and more he goes on to conceive of each thing in accordance with its true nature, and his acts like his judgments bear the stamp of his insight. Gradually his face too acquires the straight and piercing look, the expression of reason, and at last of wisdom. For the direct sight of essences alone can set its mark upon the face. Abstract knowledge about them has no such effect."²

The right conception for the philosopher depends then on his interests. Now the interest which he has above other men is that of reducing the mani-

¹ *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 2te Auflage, p. 249.

² *Welt als Wille u. Vorstellung*, II., p. 83.

fold in thought to simple form. We can no more say why the philosopher is more peculiarly sensitive to this delight, than we can explain the passion some persons have for matching colours or for arranging cards in a game of solitaire. All these passions resemble each other in one point; they are all illustrations of what may be called the æsthetic Principle of Ease. Our pleasure at finding that a chaos of facts is at bottom the expression of a single underlying fact is like the relief of the musician at resolving a confused mass of sound into melodic or harmonic order. The simplified result is handled with far less mental effort than the original data; and a philosophic conception of nature is thus in no metaphorical sense a labour-saving contrivance. The passion for parsimony, for economy of means in thought, is thus the philosophic passion *par excellence*, and any character or aspect of the world's phenomena which gathers up their diversity into simplicity will gratify that passion, and in the philosopher's mind stand for that essence of things compared with which all their other determinations may by him be overlooked.

Mere universality or extensiveness is then the one mark the philosopher's conceptions must possess. Unless they appear in an enormous number of cases they will not bring the relief which is his main theoretic need. The knowledge of things by their causes, which is often given as a definition of rational knowledge, is useless to him unless the causes converge to a minimum number whilst still pro-

ducing the maximum number of effects. The more multiple are the instances he can see to be cases of his fundamental concept, the more flowingly does his mind rove from fact to fact in the world. The phenomenal transitions are no real transitions; each item is the same old friend with a slightly altered dress. This passion for unifying things may gratify itself, as we all know, at truth's expense. Everyone has friends bent on system and everyone has observed how, when their system has once taken definite shape, they become absolutely blind and insensible to the most flagrant facts which cannot be made to fit into it. The ignoring of data is, in fact, the easiest and most popular mode of obtaining unity in one's thought.

But leaving these vulgar excesses let us glance briefly at some more dignified contemporary examples of the hypertrophy of the unifying passion.

Its ideal goal gets permanent expression in the great notion of Substance, the underlying One in which all differences are reconciled. D'Alembert's often quoted lines express the postulate in its most abstract shape: "L'univers pour qui saurait l'embrasser d'un seul point de vue ne serait, s'il est permis de le dire, qu'un fait unique et une grande vérité." Accordingly Mr. Spencer, after saying on page 158 of the first volume of his *Psychology*, that "no effort enables us to assimilate Feeling and Motion, they have nothing in common," cannot refrain on page 162 from invoking abruptly an "Unconditional Being common to the two".

The craving for Monism at any cost is the parent of the entire evolutionist movement of our day, so far as it pretends to be more than history. The Philosophy of Evolution tries to show how the world at any given time may be conceived as absolutely identical, except in appearance, with itself at all past times. What it most abhors is the admission of anything which, appearing at a given point, should be judged essentially other than what went before. Notwithstanding the *lacunæ* in Mr. Spencer's system; notwithstanding the vagueness of his terms; in spite of the sort of jugglery by which his use of the word "nascent" is made to veil the introduction of new primordial factors like consciousness, as if, like the girl in *Midshipman Easy*, he could excuse the illegitimacy of an infant, by saying it was a very little one—in spite of all this, I say, Mr. Spencer is, and is bound to be, the most popular of all philosophers, because more than any other he seeks to appease our strongest theoretic craving. To indiscriminating minds his system will be a sop; to acute ones a programme full of suggestiveness.

When Lewes asserts in one place that the nerve-process and the feeling which accompanies it are not two things but only two "aspects" of one and the same thing, whilst in other passages he seems to imply that the cognitive feeling and the outward thing cognised (which is always other than the nerve-process accompanying the cognitive act) are again one thing in two aspects (giving us thereby

as the ultimate truth One Thing in Three Aspects, very much as Trinitarian Christians affirm it to be One God in Three Persons),—the vagueness of his mode only testifies to the imperiousness of his need of unity.

The crowning feat of unification at any cost is seen in the Hegelian denial of the Principle of Contradiction. One who is willing to allow that A and not-A are one, can be checked by few farther difficulties in Philosophy.

III

But alongside of the passion for simplification, there exists a sister passion which in some minds—though they perhaps form the minority—is its rival. This is the passion for distinguishing; it is the impulse to be *acquainted* with the parts rather than to comprehend the whole. Loyalty to clearness and integrity of perception, dislike of blurred outlines, of vague identifications, are its characteristics. It loves to recognise particulars in their full completeness, and the more of these it can carry the happier it is. It is the mind of Cuvier *versus* St. Hilare, of Hume *versus* Spinoza. It prefers any amount of incoherence, abruptness and fragmentariness (so long as the literal details of the separate facts are saved) to a fallacious unity which swamps things rather than explains them.

Clearness *versus* Simplicity is then the theoretic dilemma, and a man's philosophic attitude is de-

terminated by the balance in him of these two cravings. When John Mill insists that the ultimate laws of nature cannot possibly be less numerous than the distinguishable qualities of sensation which we possess, he speaks in the name of this æsthetic demand for clearness. When Professor Bain says¹:—"There is surely nothing to be dissatisfied with, or to complain of in the circumstance that the elements of our experience are in the last resort two and not one. . . . Instead of our being 'unfortunate' in not being able to know the essence of either matter or mind—in not comprehending their union, our misfortune would rather be to have to know anything different from what we do know,"—he is animated by a like motive. All makers of architectonic systems like that of Kant, all multipliers of original principles, all dislikers of vague monotony, whether it bear the character of Eleatic stagnancy or of Heraclitic change, obey this tendency. *Ultimate kinds* of feeling bound together in harmony by laws, which themselves are *ultimate kinds* of relation, form the theoretic resting-place of such philosophers.

The unconditional demand which this need makes of a philosophy is that its fundamental terms should be representable. Phenomena are analysable into feelings and relations. Causality is a relation between two feelings. To abstract the relation from the feelings, to unify all things by referring them to a first cause, and to leave this latter relation

¹"On Mystery, etc." *Fortnightly Review*, Vol. IV. N.S., p. 394.

with no term of feeling before it, is to violate the fundamental habits of our thinking, to baffle the imagination, and to exasperate the minds of certain people much as everyone's eye is exasperated by a magic-lantern picture or a microscopic object out of focus. Sharpen it, we say, or for heaven's sake remove it altogether.

The matter is not at all helped when the word Substance is brought forward and the primordial causality said to obtain between this and the phenomena; for Substance *in se* cannot be directly imaged by feeling, and seems in fact but to be a peculiar form of relation between feelings—the relation of organic union between a group of them and time. Such relations, represented as non-phenomenal entities, become thus the *bête noire* and pet aversion of many thinkers. By being posited as existent they challenge our acquaintance but at the same instant defy it by being defined as noumenal. So far is this reaction against the treatment of relational terms as metempirical entities carried, that the reigning British school seems to deny their function even in their legitimate sphere, namely as phenomenal elements or “laws” cementing the mosaic of our feelings into coherent form. Time, likeness, and unlikeness are the only phenomenal relations our English empiricists can tolerate. One of the earliest and perhaps the most famous expression of the dislike to relations considered abstractedly is the well-known passage from Hume: “When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles,

what havoc must we make! If we take in our hand any volume of divinity or school metaphysic, for instance, let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.”¹

Many are the variations which succeeding writers have played on this tune. As we spoke of the excesses of the unifying passion, so we may now say of the craving for clear representability that it leads often to an unwillingness to treat any abstractions whatever as if they were intelligible. Even to talk of space, time, feeling, power, &c., oppresses them with a strange sense of uncanniness. Anything to be real for them must be representable in the form of a *lump*. Its other concrete determinations may be abstracted from, but its *tangible* thinghood must remain. Minds of this order, if they can be brought to psychologise at all, abound in such phrases as “tracts” of consciousness, “areas” of emotion; “molecules” of feeling, “agglutinated portions” of thought, “gangs” of ideas, &c., &c.

Those who wish an amusing example of this style of thought should read *Le Cerveau* by the anatomist Luys, surely the very worst book ever written on the much-abused subject of mental physiology. In another work, *Psychologie réaliste*, by P. Sièrebois

¹ *Essays*, ed. Green and Grose, II., p. 185.

(Paris 1876), it is maintained that "our ideas exist in us in a molecular condition, and are subject to continual movements. . . . Their mobility is as great as that of the molecules of air or any gas." When we fail to recall a word it is because our ideas are hid in some distant corner of the brain whence they cannot come to the muscles of articulation, or else "they have lost their ordinary fluidity". . . . "These ideal molecules are material portions of the brain which differs from all other matter precisely in this property which it possesses of subdividing itself into very attenuated portions which easily take on the likeness in form and quality of all external objects." In other words, when I utter the word 'rhinoceros' an actual little microscopic rhinoceros gallops towards my mouth.

A work of considerable acuteness, far above the vulgar materialistic level, is that of Czolbe, *Grundzüge einer extensionalen Erkenntnistheorie* (1875). This author explains our ideas to be extended substances endowed with mutual penetrability. The matter of which they are composed is "elastic like india-rubber". When "concentrated" by "magnetic self-attraction" into the middle of the brain, its "intensity" is such that it becomes conscious. When the attraction ceases, the idea-substance expands and diffuses itself into infinite space and so sinks from consciousness.

Again passing over these *quasi*-pathological excesses, we come to a permanent and, for our purpose, most important fact—the fact that many minds of

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the highest analytic power will tolerate in Philosophy no unifying terms but elements immanent in phenomena, and taken in their phenomenal and representable sense. Entities whose attributes are not directly given in feeling, phenomenal relations functioning as entities, are alike rejected. Spinozistic Substance, Spencerian Unknowable, are abhorred as unrepresentable things, numerically additional to the representable world. The substance of things for these clear minds can be no more than their common measure. The phenomena bear to it the same relation that the different numbers bear to unity. These contain no other matter than the repeated unit, but they may be classed as prime numbers, odd numbers, even numbers, square numbers, cube numbers, &c., just as truly and naturally as we class concrete things. The molecular motions, of which physicists hope that some day all events and properties will be seen to consist, form such an immanent unity of colossal simplifying power. The "infinitesimal event" of various modern writers, Taine for example, with its two "aspects," inner and outer, reaches still farther in the same direction. Writers of this class, if they deal with Psychology, repudiate the "soul" as a scholastic entity. The phenomenal unity of consciousness must flow from some element immutably present in each and every representation of the individual and binding the whole into one. To unearth and accurately define this phenomenal self becomes one of the fundamental tasks of Psychology.

But the greatest living insister on the principle that unity in our account of things shall not overwhelm clearness, is Charles Renouvier. His masterly exposition of the irreducible categories of thought in his *Essais de Critique générale* ought to be far better known among us than it is. The onslaughts which this eminently clear-headed writer has made and still makes in his weekly journal, the *Critique Philosophique*, on the vanity of the evolutionary principle of simplification, which supposes that you have explained away all distinctions by simply saying "they arise" instead of "they are," form the ablest criticism which the school of Evolution has received. Difference "thus displaced, transported from the *esse* to the *fieri*, is it any the less postulated? And does the *fieri* itself receive the least commencement of explanation when we suppose that everything which occurs, occurs little by little, by insensible degrees, so that, if we look at any one of these degrees, what happens does so as easily and clearly as if it did not happen at all? . . . If we want a continuous production *ex nihilo*, why not say so frankly, and abandon the idea of a 'transition without break' which explains really nothing?"¹

¹ *Critique Philosophique*, 12 Juillet, 1877, p. 383.

IV

Our first conclusion may then be this: No system of philosophy can hope to be universally accepted among men which grossly violates either of the two great æsthetic needs of our logical nature, the need of unity and the need of clearness, or entirely subordinates the one to the other. Doctrines of mere disintegration like that of Hume and his successors, will be as widely unacceptable on the one hand as doctrines of merely engulfing substantialism like those of Schopenhauer, Hartmann and Spencer on the other. Can we for our own guidance briefly sketch out here some of the conditions of most favourable compromise?

In surveying the connexions between data we are immediately struck by the fact that some are more intimate than others. Propositions which express those we call necessary truths; and with them we contrast the laxer collocations and sequences which are known as empirical, habitual or merely fortuitous. The former seem to have an *inward* reasonableness which the latter are deprived of. The link, whatever it be, which binds the two phenomena together, seems to extend from the heart of one into the heart of the next, and to be an essential reason why the facts should always and indefeasibly be as we now know them. "Within the pale we stand." As Lotze says¹: "The intellect is not satisfied with merely associated representations. In its constant

¹ *Microcosmus*, 2d ed. I., p. 281.

critical activity thought seeks to refer each representation to the rational ground which conditions the alliance of what is associated and proves that what is grouped *belongs* together. So it separates from each other those impressions which merely coalesce without inward connexions, and it renews (while corroborating them) the bonds of those which, by the inward kinship of their content, have a right to permanent companionship."

On the other hand many writers seem to deny the existence of any such inward kinship or rational bond between things. Hume says: "All our distinct perceptions are distinct existences and the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences."¹

Hume's followers are less bold in their utterances than their master, but throughout all recent British Nominalism we find the tendency to enthrone mere juxtaposition as lord of all and to make of the Universe what has well been styled a Nulliverse. "For my part," says Professor Huxley, "I utterly repudiate and anathematise the intruder [Necessity]. Fact I know; and Law I know; but what is this Necessity, save an empty shadow of the mind's own throwing?"

And similarly J. S. Mill writes: "What is called explaining one law by another is but substituting one mystery for another, and does nothing to render the course of nature less mysterious. We can no more assign a *why* for the more extensive laws than

¹ *Treatise on Human Nature*, ed. T. H. Green, I., p. 550.

for the partial ones. The explanation may substitute a mystery which has become familiar and has grown to seem not mysterious for one which is still strange. And this is the meaning of explanation in common parlance. . . . The laws thus explained or resolved are said to be *accounted for*; but the expression is incorrect if taken to mean anything more than what has been stated.”¹

And yet the very pertinacity with which such writers remind us that our explanations are in a strict sense of the word no explanations at all; that our causes never unfold the essential nature of their effects; that we never seize the inward reason why attributes cluster as they do to form things, seems to prove that they possess in their minds some ideal or pattern of what a genuine explanation would be like in case they should meet it. How could they brand our current explanations as spurious, if they had no positive notion whatever of the real thing?

Now have we the real thing? And yet may they be partly right in their denials? Surely both; and I think that the shares of truth may be easily assigned. Our “laws” *are* to a great extent but facts of larger growth, and yet things *are* inwardly and necessarily connected notwithstanding. The entire process of philosophic simplification of the chaos of sense consists of two acts, Identification and Association. Both are principles of union and therefore of theoretic rationality; but the rationality between things associated is outward and custom-bred. Only

¹ *Logic*, 8th Edition, I., p. 549.

when things are identified do we pass inwardly and necessarily from one to the other.

The first step towards unifying the chaos is to classify its items. "Every concrete thing," says Professor Bain, "falls into as many classes as it has attributes."¹ When we pick out a certain attribute to conceive it by, we literally and strictly identify it *in that respect* with the other concretes of the class having that attribute for its essence, concretes which the attribute recalls. When we conceive of sugar as a white thing it is *pro tanto* identical with snow; as a sweet thing it is the same as liquorice; *qua* hydro-carbon, as starch. The attribute picked out may be *per se* most uninteresting and familiar, but if things superficially very diverse can be found to possess it buried within them and so be assimilated with each other, "the mind feels a peculiar and genuine satisfaction. . . . The intellect, oppressed with the variety and multiplicity of facts, is joyfully relieved by the simplification and the unity of a great principle."²

Who does not feel the charm of thinking that the moon and the apple are, as far as their relation to earth goes, identical? of knowing respiration and combustion to be one? of understanding that the balloon rises by the same law whereby the stone sinks? of feeling that the warmth in one's palm when one rubs one's sleeve is identical with the motion which the friction checks? of recognising the difference between beast and fish to be only a

¹ *Ment. and Mor. Science*, p. 107.

² Bain, *Logic*, II., p. 120.

higher degree of that between human father and son? of believing our strength when we climb or chop to be no other than the strength of the sun's rays which made the oats grow out of which we got our morning meal?

We shall presently see how the attribute performing this unifying function, becomes associated with some other attribute to form what is called a general law. But at present we must note that many sciences remain in this first and simplest classificatory stage. A classificatory science is merely one the fundamental concepts of which have few associations or none with other concepts. When I say a man, a lizard, and a frog are one in being vertebrates, the identification, delightful as it is in itself, leads me hardly any farther. "The idea that all the parts of a flower are modified leaves, reveals a connecting law, which surprises us into acquiescence. But now try and define the leaf, determine its essential characteristics, so as to include all the forms that we have named. You will find yourself in a difficulty, for all distinctive marks vanish, and you have nothing left, except that a leaf in this wider sense of the term is a lateral appendage of the axis of a plant. Try then to express the proposition 'the parts of a flower are modified leaves' in the language of scientific definition, and it reads, 'the parts of the flower are lateral appendages of the axis'."¹ Truly a bald result! Yet a dozen years ago there hardly lived a naturalist who was not

¹ Helmholtz, *Popular Scientific Lectures*, p. 47.

thrilled with rapture at identifications in "philosophic" anatomy and botany exactly on a par with this. Nothing could more clearly show that the gratification of the sentiment of rationality depends hardly at all on the worth of the attribute which strings things together but almost exclusively on the mere fact of their being strung at all. Theological implications were the utmost which the attributes of archetypal zoölogy carried with them, but the wretched poverty of these proves how little they had to do with the enthusiasm engendered by archetypal identifications. Take Agassiz's conception of class-characters, order-characters, &c., as "thoughts of God." What meagre thoughts! Take Owen's archetype of the vertebrate skeleton as revealing the artistic temperament of the Creator. It is a grotesque figure with neither beauty nor ethical suggestiveness, fitted rather to discredit than honour the Divine Mind. In short the conceptions led no farther than the identification pure and simple. The transformation which Darwin has effected in the classificatory sciences is simply this—that in his theory the class-essence is not a unifying attribute pure and simple, but an attribute with wide associations. When a frog, a man and a lizard are recognised as one, not simply in having the same back-bone, &c., but in being all offspring of one parent, our thought instead of coming to a standstill, is immediately confronted with further problems and, we hope, solutions. Who were that parent's ancestors and cousins? Why was he chosen

out of all to found such an enormous line? Why did he himself perish in the struggle to survive? etc.

Association of class-attributes, *inter se*, is thus the next great step in the mind's simplifying industry. By it Empirical Laws are founded and sciences, from classificatory, become explanatory. Without it we should be in the position of a judge who could only decide that the cases in his court belonged each to a certain class, but who should be inhibited from passing sentence, or attaching to the class-name any further notion of duty, liability, or penalty. This *coupling* of the class-concept with certain determinate *consequences* associated therewithal, is what is practically important in the laws of nature as in those of society.

When, for example, we have identified prisms, bowls of water, lenses and strata of air as distorting media, the next step is to learn that all distorting media refract light rays towards the perpendicular. Such additional determination makes a law. But this law itself may be as inscrutable as the concrete fact we started from. The entrance of a ray and its swerving towards the perpendicular, may be simply *associated* properties, with, for aught we see, no inwardly necessary bond, coupled together as empirically as the colour of a man's eyes with the shape of his nose.

But such an empirical law may have its terms again classified. The essence of the medium may be to retard the light-wave's speed. The essence (in an obliquely-striking wave) of deflexion towards

the perpendicular may be earlier retardation of that part of the wave-front which enters first, so that the remaining portion swings round it before getting in. Medium and bending towards perpendicular thus coalesce into the one identical fact of retardation. This being granted gives an inward explanation of all above it. But retardation itself remains an empirical coupling of medium and light-movement until we have classified both under a single concept. The explanation reached by the insight that two phenomena are at bottom one and the same phenomenon, is rational in the ideal and ultimate sense of the word. The ultimate identification of the subject and predicate of a mathematical theorem, an identification which we can always reach in our reasonings, is the source of the inward necessity of mathematical demonstration. We see that the top and bottom of a parallelogram must be equal as soon as we have unearthed in the parallelogram the attribute that it consists of two equal, juxtaposed triangles of which its top and bottom form homologous sides—that is, as soon as we have seen that top and bottom have an identical essence, their length, as being such sides, and that their position is an accident. This criterion of identity is that which we all unconsciously use when we discriminate between brute fact and explained fact. There is no other test.

In the contemporary striving of physicists to interpret every event as a case of motion concealed or visible, we have an adumbration of the way in which

a common essence may make the sensible heterogeneity of things inwardly rational. The cause is one motion, the effect the same motion transferred to other molecules; in other words, physics aims at the same kind of rationality as mathematics. In the second volume of Lewes's *Problems* we find this anti-Humean view that the effect is the "procession" of the cause, or that they are one thing in two aspects brought prominently forward.¹

And why, on the other hand, do all our contemporary physical philosophers so vie with each other in the zeal with which they reiterate that in reality nerve-processes and brain-tremors "explain" nothing of our feelings? Why does "the chasm between the two classes of phenomena still remain intellectually impassable"?² Simply because, in the words of Spencer which we quoted a few pages back, feeling and motion have nothing whatever in common, no identical essence by which we can conceive both, and so, as Tyndall says, "pass by a process of reasoning from one to the other." The "double-aspect" school postulate the blank form of "One and the Same Fact," appeal to the image of the circle which is both convex and concave, and think that they have by this symbolic identification made the matter seem more rational.

¹ This view is in growing favour with thinkers fed from empirical sources. See Wundt's *Physikalische Axiome* and the important article by A. Riehl, "Causalität und Identität," in *Vierteljahrssch. f. wiss. Philos.* Bd. I., p. 265. The Humean view is ably urged by Chauncey Wright, *Philosophical Discussions*, N.Y., 1877, p. 406.

² Tyndall, *Fragments of Science*, 2d ed., p. 121.

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Thus then the connexions of things become strictly rational only when, by successive substitutions of essences for things, and higher for lower essences, we succeed in reaching a point of view from which we can view the things as one. A and B are concretes; *a* and *b* are partial attributes with which for the present case we conceive them to be respectively identical (classify them) and which are coupled by a general law. M is a further attribute which rationally explains the general law as soon as we perceive it to form the essence of both *a* and *b*, as soon as we identify them with each other through it. The softening of asphalt pavements in August is explained first by the empirical law that heat, which is the essence of August, produces melting, which is the essence of the pavement's change, and secondly this law is inwardly rationalised by the conception of both heat and melting being at the bottom one and the same fact, namely, increased molecular mobility.

Proximate and ultimate explanations are then essentially the same thing. Classification involves all that is inward in any explanation, and a perfected rationalisation of things means only a *completed* classification of them. Every one feels that all explanation whatever, even by reference to the most proximate empirical law, does involve something of the essence of inward rationalisation. How else can we understand such words as these from Professor Huxley? "The fact that it is impossible to comprehend how it is that a physical state gives

rise to a mental state, no more lessens the value of our [empirical] explanation of the latter case, than the fact that it is utterly impossible to comprehend how motion is communicated from one body to another weakens the force of the explanation of the motion of one billiard-ball by showing that another has hit it."¹

To return now to the philosophic problem. It is evident that our idea of the universe cannot assume an inwardly rational shape until each separate phenomenon is conceived as fundamentally identical with every other. But the important fact to notice is that in the steps by which this end is reached the really rationalising, pregnant moments are the successive steps of conception, the moments of picking out essences. The association of these essences into laws, the empirical coupling, is done by nature for us and is hardly worthy to be called an intellectual act, and on the other hand the coalescence-into-one of all items in which the same essence is discerned, in other words the perception that an essence whether ultimate, simple and universal, or proximate and specific, is identical with itself wherever found, is a barren truism. The living question always is, *Where is it found?* To stand before a phenomenon and say *what* it is; in other words to pick out from it the embedded character (or characters) also embedded in the maximum number of *other* phenomena, and so identify it with them—here lie the stress and strain, here the test of

¹ "Modern Symposium," *XIXth Century*, Vol. I., 1877.

the philosopher. So we revert to what we said far back: the genius can do no more than this; in Butler's words:

"He knows *what's what*, and that's as high
As metaphysic wit can fly." ¹

¹ This doctrine is perfectly congruous with the conclusion that identities are the only propositions necessary *a priori*, though of course it does not necessarily lead to that conclusion, since there may be in things elements which are not simple but bilateral or synthetic, like straightness and shortness in a line, convexity and concavity in a curve. Should the empiricists succeed in their attempt to resolve such Siamese-twin elements into habitual juxtapositions, the Principle of Identity would become the only *a priori* truth, and the philosophic problem like all our ordinary problems would become a question as to facts: *What* are these facts which we perceive to exist? Are there any existing facts corresponding to this or that conceived class? Lewes, in the interesting discussion on necessary and contingent truth in the Prolegomena to his *History* and in Chapter XIII. of his first *Problem*, seems at first sight to take up an opposite position, in that he maintains our commonly so-called contingent truths to be really necessary. But his treatment of the question most beautifully confirms the doctrine I have advanced in the text. If the proposition "A is B" is ever true, he says it is so necessarily. But he proves the necessity by showing that what we mean by A is its essential attribute *x*, and what we mean by B is again *x*. Only *in so far* as A and B are identical is the proposition true. But he admits that a fact sensibly just like A may lack *x*, and a fact sensibly unlike B may have it. In either case the proposition, to be true, must change. The contingency which he banishes from propositions, he thus houses in their terms; making as I do the act of conception, subsumption, classification, intuition, naming, or whatever else one may prefer to call it, the pivot on which thought turns. Before this act there is infinite indeterminateness—A and B may be anything. After the act there is the absolute certainty of truism—all *x*'s are the same. *In the act*—is A, *x*? is B, *x*? or not?—we have the sphere of truth and error, of living experience, in short, of Fact. As Lewes himself says: "The only necessity is that a thing is what it is; the only contingency is that our proposition may not state what the thing is" (*Problems*, Vol. I., p. 395).

V

We have now to ask ourselves how far this identification may be legitimately carried and what, when perfected, its real worth is. But before passing to these further questions we had best secure our ground by defending our fundamental notion itself from nominalistic attacks. The reigning British school has always denied that the same attribute is identical with itself in different individuals. I started above with the assumption that when we look at a subject with a certain purpose, regard it from a certain point of view, some one attribute becomes its essence and identifies it, *pro hac vice*, with a class. To this James Mill replies: "But what is meant by a mode of regarding things? This is mysterious; and is as mysteriously explained, when it is said to be the taking into view the particulars in which individuals agree. For what is there, which it is possible for the mind to take into view, in that in which individuals agree? Every colour is an individual colour, every size is an individual size, every shape is an individual shape. But things have no individual colour in common, no individual shape in common; no individual size in common; that is to say, they have neither shape, colour, nor size in common. What, then, is it which they have in common, which the mind can take into view? Those who affirmed that it was something, could by no means tell. They substituted words for things; using vague and mystical phrases,

which, when examined, meant nothing;"¹ the truth being according to this heroic author, that the only thing that can be possessed in common is a name. Black in the coat and black in the shoe agree only in that both are named black—the fact that on this view the *name* is never the same when used twice being quite overlooked. But the blood of the giants has grown weak in these days, and the nominalistic utterances of our contemporaries are like sweet-bells jangled, sadly out of tune. If they begin with a clear nominalistic note, they are sure to end with a grating rattle which sounds very like *universalia in re*, if not *ante rem*. In M. Taine,² who may fairly be included in the British School, they are almost *ante rem*. This *bruit de cloche fêlée*, as the doctors say, is pathognomonic of the condition of Ockham's entire modern progeny.

But still we may find expressions like this: "When I say that the sight of any object gives me the *same* sensation or emotion to-day that it did yesterday, or the *same* which it gives to some other

¹ *Analysis*, Vol. I., p. 249.

² How can M. Taine fail to have perceived that the entire doctrine of "Substitution" so clearly set forth in the nominalistic beginning of his brilliant book is utterly senseless except on the supposition of realistic principles like those which he so admirably expounds at its close? How *can* the image be a useful substitute for the sensation, the tendency for the image, the name for the tendency, unless sensation, image, tendency and name be *identical* in some respect, in respect namely of function, of the relations they enter into? Were this realistic basis laid at the outset of Taine's *De l'Intelligence*, it would be one of the most consistent instead of one of the most self-contradictory works of our day.

person, this is evidently an incorrect application of the word *same*; for the feeling which I had yesterday is gone never to return. . . . Great confusion of ideas is often produced, and many fallacies engendered, in otherwise enlightened understandings, by not being sufficiently alive to the fact (in itself not always to be avoided), that they use the same name to express ideas so different as those of identity and undistinguishable resemblance."¹

What are the exact facts? Take the sensation I got from a cloud yesterday and from the snow to-day. The white of the snow and that of the cloud differ in place, time and associates; they agree in quality, and we may say in origin, being in all probability both produced by the activity of the same brain tract. Nevertheless, John Mill denies our right to call the quality the same. He says that it essentially differs in every different occasion of its appearance, and that no two phenomena of which it forms part are really identical even as far as it goes. Is it not obvious that to maintain this view he must abandon the phenomenal plane altogether? Phenomenally considered, the white *per se* is identical with itself wherever found in snow or in cloud, to-day or to-morrow. If any nominalist deny the identity I ask him to point out the difference. *Ex hypothesi* the qualities are sensibly indistinguishable, and the only difference he can indicate is that of time and place; but these are not differences in

¹ J. S. Mill, *Logic*, 8th Ed., I., p. 77.

the quality. If our quality be not the same with itself, what meaning has the word "same"? Our adversary though silenced may still grudge assent, but if he analyse carefully the grounds of this reluctance he will, I think, find that it proceeds from a difficulty in believing that the *cause* of the quality can be just the same at different times. In other words he abandons altogether the platform of the sensible phenomenon and ascends into the empyrean, postulating some inner noumenal principle of *quality + time + place + concomitants*. The entire group being never twice alike, of course this ground, or being *in se*, of the quality must each time be distinct and, so to speak, personal. This transcendental view is frankly avowed by Mr. Spencer in his *Psychology*, II., p. 63 (the passage is too complex to quote); but all nominalists must start from it, if they think clearly at all.¹

We, who are phenomenists, may leave all metaphysical entities which have the power of producing whiteness to their fate, and content ourselves with the irreversible *datum* of perception that the whiteness after it is manifested is the same, be it here or be it there. Of all abstractions such entities

¹ I fear that even after this some persons will remain unconvinced, but then it seems to me the matter has become a dispute about words. If my supposed adversary, when he says that different times and places prevent a quality which appears in them from ever being twice the same, will admit that they do not make it in any conceivable way *different*, I will willingly abandon the words "same" and "identical" to his fury; though I confess it becomes rather inconvenient to have no single positive word left by which to indicate complete absence of difference.

are the emptiest, being ontological hypostatisations of the mere susceptibility of being distinguished, whilst this susceptibility has its real, nameable, phenomenal ground all the while, in the time, place, and relations affected by the attribute considered.

The truly wise man will take the phenomenon in its entirety and permanently sacrifice no one aspect to another. Time, place, and relations differ, he will freely say; but let him just as freely admit that the quality is identical with itself through all these differences. Then if, *to satisfy the philosophical interest*, it becomes needful to conceive this identical part as the essence of the several entire phenomena, he will gladly call them one; whilst if some other interest be paramount, the points of difference will become essential and the identity an accident. Realism is eternal and invincible in this phenomenal sense.

We have thus vindicated against all assailants our title to consider the world as a matter susceptible of rational formulation in the deepest, most inward sense, and not as a disintegrated sand-heap; and we are consequently at liberty to ask: (1) Whether the mutual identification of its items meet with any necessary limit; and (2) What, supposing the operation completed, its real worth and import amount to.

VI

In the first place, when we have rationally explained the connexion of the items A and B by iden-

tifying both with their common attribute α , it is obvious that we have really explained only so much of these items as is α . To explain the connexion of choke-damp and suffocation by the lack of oxygen is to leave untouched all the other peculiarities both of choke-damp and of suffocation, such as convulsions and agony on the one hand, density and explosibility on the other. In a word, so far as A and B contain l, m, n and o, p, q , respectively, in addition to α , they are not explained by α . Each additional particularity makes its distinct appeal to our rational craving. A single explanation of a fact only explains it from a single point of view.¹ The entire fact is not accounted for until each and all of its characters have been identified with their likes elsewhere. To apply this now to universal formulas we see that the explanation of the world by molecular movements explains it only so far as it actually is such movements. To invoke the "Unknowable" explains only so much as is unknowable; "Love" only so much as is love; "Thought," so much as is thought; "Strife," so much as is strife. All data whose actual phenomenal quality cannot

¹ In the number of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* for April, 1879, Prof. John Watson most admirably asserts and expresses the truth which constitutes the back-bone of this article, namely that every manner of conceiving a fact is relative to some interest, and that there are no absolutely essential attributes—every attribute having the right to call itself essential in turn, and the truth consisting of nothing less than all of them together. I avow myself unable to comprehend as yet this author's Hegelian point of view, but his pages 164 to 172 are a most welcome corroboration of what I have striven to advance in the text.

be identified with the attribute invoked as Universal Principle, remain outside as ultimate, independent *kinds* or *natures*, associated by empirical laws with the fundamental attribute but devoid of truly rational kinship with it. If A and B are to be *thoroughly* rationalized together, *l*, *m*, *n*, and *o*, *p*, *q*, must each and all turn out to be so many cases of *x* in disguise. This kind of wholesale identification is being now attempted by physicists when they conceive of all the ancient, separate Forces as so many determinations of one and the same essence, molecular mass, position and velocity.

Suppose for a moment that this idea were carried out for the physical world,—the subjective sensations produced by the different molecular energies, colour, sound, taste, etc., etc., the relations of likeness and contrast, of time and position, of ease and effort, the emotions of pain and delight, in short, all the mutually irreducible categories of mental life, would still remain over. Certain writers strive in turn to reduce all these to a common measure, the primordial unit of feeling, or infinitesimal mental event which builds them up as bricks build houses. But this case is wholly different from the last. The physical molecule is conceived not only as having a being *in se* apart from representation, but as being essentially of representable kind. With magnified perceptions we should actually see it. The mental molecule, on the other hand, has by its very definition no existence except in being felt, and yet by the same definition

never is felt. It is neither a fact in consciousness nor a fact out of consciousness, and falls to the ground as a transcendental absurdity. Nothing could be more inconclusive than the empirical arguments for the existence of this noumenal feeling which Taine and Spencer draw from the sense of hearing.

But let us waive for an instant all this and suppose our feelings reduced to one. We should then have two primordial natures, the molecule of matter and the molecule of mind, coupled by an empirical law. Phenomenally incommensurable, the attempt to reduce them to unity by calling them two "aspects" is vain so long as it is not pointed out who is there *adspicere*; and the *Machtspruch* that they are expressions of one underlying Reality has no rationalising function so long as that reality is confessed unknowable. Nevertheless the absolute necessity of an identical material substratum for the different species of feeling on the one hand, and the *genera* feeling and motion on the other, if we are to have any evolutionary *explanation* of things, will lead to ever renewed attempts at an atomistic hylozoism. Already Clifford and Taine, Spencer, Fechner, Zöllner, G. S. Hall, and more besides, have given themselves up to this ideal.

But again let us waive this criticism and admit that even the chasm between feeling and motion may be rationally bridged by the conception of the bilateral atom of being. Let us grant that this atom by successive compoundings with its fellows

builds up the universe; is it not still clear that each item in the universe would still be explained only as to its general *quality* and not as to its other particular determinations? The particulars depend on the exact number of primordial atoms existing at the outset and their exact distances from each other. The "universal formula" of Laplace which Du Bois-Reymond has made such striking use of in his lecture *Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens*, cannot possibly get along with fewer than this almost infinite number of data. Their homogeneity does not abate their infinity—each is a separate empirical fact.

And when we now retract our provisional admissions, and deny that feelings incommensurable *inter se* and with motion can be possibly unified, we see at once that the reduction of the phenomenal Chaos to rational form must stop at a certain point. It is a limited process,—bounded by the number of elementary attributes which cannot be mutually identified, the specific *qualia* of representation, on the one hand, and, on the other, by the number of entities (atoms or monads or what not) with their complete mathematical determinations, requisite for deducing the fulness of the concrete world. All these irreducible data form a system, no longer phenomenally rational, *inter se*, but bound together by what are for us empirical laws. We merely find the system existing as a matter of fact, and write it down. In short, a plurality of categories and an immense number of primordial entities, determined

according to these categories, is the minimum of philosophic baggage, the only possible compromise between the need of clearness and the need of unity. All simplification, beyond this point, is reached either by throwing away the particular concrete determinations of the fact to be explained, or else it is illusory simplification. In the latter case it is made by invoking some sham term, some pseudo-principle, and conglomerating it and the data into one. The principle may be an immanent element but no true universal: Sensation, Thought, Will are principles of this kind; or it may be a transcendent entity like Matter, Spirit, Substance, the Unknowable, the Unconscious, &c.¹ Such attempts as these latter do but postulate unification, not effect; and if taken avowedly to represent a mere claim, may be allowed to stand. But if offered as actual explanations, though they may serve as a sop to the rabble, they can but nauseate those whose philosophic appetite is genuine and entire. If we choose the former mode of simplification and are willing to abstract from the particulars of time, place and combination in the concrete world, we may simplify our elements very much by neglecting the numbers and collocations of our primordial elements and attending to their qualitative categories alone. The system formed by these will then really rationalise the universe so far as its qualities go. Nothing can

¹ The idea of "God" in its popular function is open to neither of these objections, being conceived as a phenomenon standing in causal relation to other phenomena. As such, however, it has no unifying function of a properly *explanatory* kind.

happen in it incommensurable with these data, and practically this abstract treatment of the world as quality is all that philosophers aim at. They are satisfied when they can see it to be a place in which none but these qualities appear, and in which the same quality appears not only once but identically repeats itself. They are willing to ignore, or leave to special sciences the knowledge of what times, places and concomitants the recurring quality is likely to affect. The *Essais de Critique générale* of Renouvier form, to my mind, by far the ablest answer to the philosophic need thus understood, clearness and unity being there carried each to the farthest point compatible with the other's existence.

VII

And now comes the question as to the worth of such an achievement. How much better off is the philosopher when he has got his system than he was before it? As a mere phenomenal system it stands between two fires. On the one hand the unbridled craver of unity scorns it, as being incompletely rational, still to a great extent an empirical sandheap; whilst on the other the practical man despises its empty and abstract barrenness. All it says is that the elements of the world are such and such and that each is identical with itself wherever found; but the question: Where is it found? (which is for the practical man the all-important question about each element) he is left to answer by his own

wit. Which, of all the essences, shall here and now be held the essence of this concrete thing, the fundamental philosophy never attempts to decide. We seem thus led to the conclusion that a system of categories is, on the one hand, the only possible philosophy, but is, on the other, a most miserable and inadequate substitute for the fulness of the truth. It is a monstrous abridgment of things which like all abridgments is got by the absolute loss and casting out of real matter. This is why so few human beings truly care for Philosophy. The particular determinations which she ignores are the real matter exciting other æsthetic and practical needs, quite as potent and authoritative as hers. What does the moral enthusiast care for philosophical ethics? Why does the *Æsthetik* of every German philosopher appear to the artist like the abomination of desolation? What these men need is a particular counsel, and no barren, universal truism.

“Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie
Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum.”

The entire man, who feels all needs by turns, will take nothing as an equivalent for Life but the fulness of living itself. Since the essences of things are as a matter of fact spread out and disseminated through the whole extent of time and space, it is in their spread-outness and alternation that he will enjoy them. When weary of the concrete clash and dust and pettiness, he will refresh himself by an occasional bath in the eternal spring, or fortify himself by a daily look at the immutable Natures.

But he will only be a visitor, not a dweller in the region; he will never carry the philosophic yoke upon his shoulders, and when tired of the gray monotony of her problems and insipid spaciousness of her results, will always escape gleefully into the teeming and dramatic richness of the concrete world.

So our study turns back here to its beginning. We started by calling every concept a teleological instrument (*supra*, p. 86). No concept can be a valid substitute for a concrete reality except with reference to a particular interest in the conceiver. The interest of theoretic rationality, the relief of identification, is but one of a thousand human purposes. When others rear their heads it must pack up its little bundle and retire till its turn recurs. The exaggerated dignity and value that philosophers have claimed for their solutions is thus greatly reduced. The only virtue their theoretic conception need have is simplicity, and a simple conception is an equivalent for the world only so far as the world is simple; the world meanwhile, whatever simplicity it may harbour, being also a mightily complex affair. Enough simplicity remains, however, and enough urgency in our craving to reach it, to make the theoretic function one of the most invincible and authoritative of human impulses. All ages have their intellectual populace. That of our own day prides itself particularly on its love of Science and Facts and its contempt for all metaphysics. Just weaned from the Sunday-

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school nurture of its early years, with the taste of the catechism still in its mouth, it is perhaps not surprising that its palate should lack discrimination and fail to recognise how much of ontology is contained in the "Nature," "Force" and "Necessary Law," how much mysticism in the "Awe," "Progress" and "Loyalty to Truth," or whatever the other phrases may be with which it sweetens its rather meagre fare of fragmentary physiology and physics. But its own inconsistency should teach it that the eradication of music, painting and poetry, games of chance and skill, manly sports and all other æsthetic energies from human life, would be an easy task compared with that suppression of Metaphysics which it aspires to accomplish. Metaphysics of some sort there must be. The only alternative is between the good Metaphysics of clear-headed Philosophy and the trashy Metaphysics of vulgar Positivism. Metaphysics, the quest of the last clear elements of things, is but another name for thought which seeks thorough self-consistency; and so long as men must think at all, some will be found willing to forsake all else to follow that ideal.

VIII

Suppose then the goal attained. Suppose we have at last a Metaphysics in which clearness and unity join friendly hands. Whether it be over a system of interlocked elements, or over a substance, or over such a simple fact as "phenomenon" or "rep-

resentation," need not trouble us now. For the discussion which follows we will call the result the metaphysical Datum and leave its composite or simple nature uncertain. Whichever it be, and however limited as we have seen be the sphere of its utility, it satisfies, if no other need, at least the need of rationality. But now I ask: Can that which is the ground of rationality in all else be itself properly called rational? It would seem at first sight that in the sense of the word we have hitherto alone considered, it might. One is tempted at any rate to say that, since the craving for rationality in a theoretic or logical sense consists in the identification of one thing with all other outstanding things, a unique datum which left nothing else outstanding would leave no play for further rational demand, and might thus be said to quench that demand or to be rational *in se*. No *otherness* being left to annoy the minds we should sit down at peace.

In other words, just as the theoretic tranquillity of the boor results from his spinning no further considerations about his chaotic universe which may prevent him from going about his practical affairs; so any brute datum whatever (provided it were simple and clear) ought to banish mystery from the Universe of the philosopher and confer perfect theoretic peace, inasmuch as there would then be for him absolutely no further considerations to spin.

This in fact is what some persons think. Professor Bain says: "A difficulty is solved, a mystery unriddled, when it can be shown to resemble some-

thing else; to be an example of a fact already known. Mystery is isolation, exception, or it may be apparent contradiction: the resolution of the mystery is found in assimilation, identity, fraternity. When all things are assimilated, so far as assimilation can go, so far as likeness holds, there is an end to explanation; there is an end to what the mind can do, or can intelligently desire. . . . The path of science as exhibited in modern ages, is towards generality, wider and wider, until we reach the highest, the widest laws of every department of things; there explanation is finished, mystery ends, perfect vision is gained."

But unfortunately this first answer will not hold. Whether for good or evil, it is an empirical fact that the mind is so wedded to the process of seeing an *other* beside every item of its experience, that when the notion of an absolute datum which is all is presented to it, it goes through its usual procedure and remains *pointing* at the void beyond, as if in that lay further matter for contemplation. In short, it spins for itself the further positive consideration of a Nonentity enveloping the Being of its datum; and as that leads to no issue on the further side, back recoils the thought in a circle towards its datum again. But there is no logical identity, no natural bridge between nonentity and this particular datum, and the thought stands oscillating to and fro, wondering "Why was there anything but nonentity? Why just this universal datum and not another? Why anything at all?"

and finds no end, in wandering mazes lost. Indeed, Professor Bain's words are so untrue that in reflecting men it is just when the attempt to fuse the manifold into a single totality has been most successful, when the conception of the universe as a *fait unique* (in D'Alembert's words) is nearest its perfection, that the craving for further explanation, the ontological *θωπεύειν* arises in its extremest pungency.

As Schopenhauer says, "The uneasiness which keeps the never-resting clock of metaphysics in motion, is the consciousness that the non-existence of this world is just as possible as its existence".¹

The notion of Nonentity may thus be called the parent of the philosophic craving in its subtlest and profoundest sense. Absolute existence is absolute mystery. Although *selbstständig*, it is not *selbstverständlich*; for its relations with the Nothing remain unmediated to our understanding. One philosopher only, so far as I know, has pretended to throw a logical bridge over this chasm. Hegel, by trying to show that Nonentity and Being as actually determined are linked together by a series of successive identities, binds the whole of possible thought into an adamant unity with no conceivable outlying notion to disturb the free rotary circulation of the mind within its bounds. Since such unchecked motion constitutes the feeling of rationality, he must be held, if he has succeeded, to have eternally and absolutely quenched all its logical demands.

¹ *Welt als Wille &c.*, 3 Auflage, I., p. 189.

But for those who, like most of us, deem Hegel's heroic effort to have failed, nought remains but to confess that when all has been unified to its supreme degree (Professor Bain to the contrary notwithstanding), the notions of a Nonentity, or of a possible Other than the actual, may still haunt our imagination and prey upon the ultimate data of our system. The bottom of Being is left logically opaque to us, a *datum* in the strict sense of the word, something which we simply come upon and find, and about which (if we wish to act) we should pause and wonder as little as possible. In this confession lies the lasting truth of Empiricism, and in it Empiricism and imaginative Faith join hands. The logical attitude of both is identical, they both say there is a *plus ultra* beyond all we know, a womb of unimagined other possibility. They only differ in their sentimental temper: Empiricism says, "Into the *plus ultra* you have no right to carry your anthropomorphic affirmations"; Faith says, "You have no right to extend to it your denials". The mere ontologic emotion of wonder, of mystery, has in some minds such a tinge of the rapture of sublimity, that for this æsthetic reason alone, it will be difficult for any philosophic system completely to exorcise it.

In truth, the philosopher's logical tranquillity is after all in essence no other than the boor's. Their difference regards only the point at which each refuses to let further considerations upset the absoluteness of the data he assumes. The boor does

so immediately, and is therefore liable at any moment to the ravages of many kinds of confusion and doubt. The philosopher does not do so till unity has been reached, and is therefore warranted against the inroads of *those* considerations—but only practically, not essentially, secure from the blighting breath of the *ultimate* “Why?” Positivism takes a middle ground, and with a certain consciousness of the beyond, abruptly refuses by an inhibitory action of the will to think any further, stamps the ground and says, “Physics, I espouse thee! for better or worse, be thou my absolute!”

The Absolute is what has not yet been transcended, criticised or made relative. So far from being something quintessential and unattainable as is so often pretended, it is practically the most familiar thing in life. Every thought is absolute to us at the moment of conceiving it or acting upon it. It only becomes relative in the light of further reflection. This may make it flicker and grow pale—the notion of nonentity may blow in from the infinite and extinguish the theoretic rationality of a universal datum. As regards this latter, absoluteness and rationality are in fact convertible terms. And the chief effort of the rationalising philosopher must be to gain an absoluteness for his datum which shall be *stable* in the maximum degree, or as far as possible removed from exposure to those further considerations by which we saw that the vulgar *Weltanschauung* may so promptly be upset. I shall henceforward call the further considerations which may

supervene and make relative or derationalise a mass of thought, the *reductive* of that thought. The reductive of absolute being is thus nonentity, or the notion of an *aliter possibile* which it involves. The reductive of an absolute physics is the thought that all material facts are representations in a mind. The reductive of absolute time, space, causality, atoms, &c., are the so-called antinomies which arise as soon as we think fully out the thoughts we have begun. The reductive of absolute knowledge is the constant potentiality of doubt, the notion that the next thought may always correct the present one—resulting in the notion that a noumenal world is there mocking the one we think we know. Whatever we think, some reductive seems in strict theoretic legitimacy always imminently hovering over our thought ready to blight it. Doubtfulness dismissed at the front door re-enters in the rear and spoils the rationality of the simple datum we flattered ourselves we had attained. Theoretically the task of the philosopher, if he cannot reconcile the datum with the reductive by the way of identification *à la* Hegel, is to exorcise the reductive so that the datum may hold up its head again and know no fear. Professor Bain would no doubt say that nonentity was a pseud-idea not derived from experience and therefore meaningless, and so exorcise that reductive.¹ The antinomies may be exorcised by the

¹ The author of *A Candid Examination of Theism* (Trübner, 1878) exercises Nonentity by the notion of the all-excluding infinitude of Existence,—whether reasonably or not I refrain

distinction between potentiality and actuality.¹ The ordinary half educated materialist comforts himself against idealists by the notion that, after all, thought is such an obscure mystical form of existence that it is almost as bad as no existence at all, and need not be seriously taken into account by a sensible man.

If nothing else could be conceived than thoughts or fancies, these would be credited with the maximum of reality. Their reductive is the belief in an objective reality of which they are but copies. When this belief takes the form of the affirmation of a noumenal world contrasted with all possible thought, and therefore playing no other part than that of reductive pure and simple,—to discover the formula of exorcism becomes, and has been recognized ever since Kant to be, one of the principal tasks of philosophy rationally understood.

The reductive used by nominalists to discredit the self-identity of the same attribute in different phenomena is the notion of a still higher degree of identity. We easily exorcise this reductive by challenging them to show what the higher degree of sameness can possibly contain which is not already in the lower.

The notion of Nonentity is not only a reductive; it can assume upon occasion an exorcising function.

from deciding. The last chapter of this work (published a year after the present text was written) is on "the final Mystery of Things," and expresses in striking language much that I have said.

¹ See Renouvier: *Premier Essai*.

If, for example, a man's ordinary mundane consciousness feels staggered at the improbability of an immaterial thinking-principle being the source of all things, Nonentity comes in and says, "Contrasted with me (that is, considered simply as *existent*) one principle is as probable as another". If the same mundane consciousness recoils at the notion of providence towards individuals or individual immortality as involving, the one too infinite a subdivision of the divine attention, the other a too infinite accumulation of population in the heavens, Nonentity says, "As compared with me all quantities are one: the wonder is all there when God has found it worth His while to guard or save a single soul".

But if the philosopher fails to find a satisfactory formula of exorcism for his datum, the only thing he can do is to "blink" the reductive at a certain point, assume the Given as his necessary ultimate, and proceed to a life whether of contemplation or of action based on that. There is no doubt this half wilful act of arrest, this acting on an opaque necessity, is accompanied by a certain pleasure. See the reverence of Carlyle for brute fact: "There is an infinite significance in Fact." "Necessity," says a German philosopher,¹ and he means not rational but simply given necessity, "is the last and highest point that we can reach in a rational conception of the world. . . . It is not only the interest of ultimate and definitive knowledge, but also

¹ Dühring: *Cursus der Philosophie*, Leipzig, 1875, p. 35.

that of the feelings, to find a last repose and an ideal equilibrium, in an uttermost datum which can simply not be other than it is."

Such is the attitude of ordinary men in their theism, God's fiat being in physics and morals such an uttermost datum. Such also is the attitude of all hard-minded analysts and *Verstandesmenschen*. Renouvier and Hodgson, the two foremost contemporary philosophers, promptly say that of experience as a whole no account can be given, but do not seek to soften the abruptness of the confession or reconcile us with our impotence.

Such mediating attempts may be made by more mystical minds. The peace of rationality may be sought through ecstasy when logic fails. To religious persons of every shade of doctrine moments come when the world as it is seems so divinely orderly, and the acceptance of it by the heart so rapturously complete, that intellectual questions vanish, nay the intellect itself is hushed to sleep—as Wordsworth says, "Thought is not, in enjoyment it expires". Ontological emotion so fills the soul that ontological speculation can no longer overlap it and put her girdle of interrogation-marks around existence. Even the least religious of men must have felt with our national ontologic poet, Walt Whitman, when loafing on the grass on some transparent summer morning, that "Swiftly arose and spread around him the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of the earth". At such moments of energetic living we feel as if there were

something diseased and contemptible, yea vile, in theoretic grubbing and brooding. To feel "I *am* the truth" is to abolish the opposition between knowing and being.

Since the heart can thus wall out the ultimate irrationality which the head ascertains, the erection of its procedure into a systematised method would be a philosophic achievement of first-rate importance. As used by mystics hitherto it has lacked universality, being available for few persons and at few times, and even in these being apt to be followed by fits of "reaction" and "dryness"; but it may nevertheless be the forerunner of what will ultimately prove a true method. If all men could permanently say with Jacobi, "In my heart there is light," though they should for ever fail to give an articulate account of it, existence would really be rationalised.¹

But if men should ever all agree that the mystical

¹ A curious recent contribution to the construction of a universal mystical method is contained in the *Anæsthetic Revelation* by Benj. P. Blood (Amsterdam, N.Y., 1874). The author, who is a writer abounding in verbal felicities, thinks we may all grasp the secret of Being if we only intoxicate ourselves often enough with laughing-gas. "There is in the instant of recall from the anæsthetic stupor a moment in which the genius of being is revealed. . . . Patients try to speak of it but invariably fail in a lost mood of introspection. . . . But most will accept this as the central point of the illumination that sanity is not the basic quality of intelligence, . . . but that only in sanity is formal or contrasting thought, while the naked life is realised outside of sanity altogether. It is the instant contrast of this tasteless water of souls with formal thought as we *come to* that leaves the patient in an astonishment that the awful mystery of life is at last but a homely and common

method is a subterfuge without logical pertinency, a plaster, but no cure, that the Hegelian method is fallacious, that the idea of Nonentity can therefore neither be exorcised nor identified, Empiricism will be the ultimate philosophy. Existence will be a brute Fact to which as a whole the emotion of ontologic wonder shall rightfully cleave, but remain eternally unsatisfied. This wonderfulness or mysteriousness will then be an essential attribute of the nature of things, and the exhibition and emphasizing of it will always continue to be an ingredient in the philosophic industry of the race. Every generation will produce its *Job*, its *Hamlet*, its *Faust* or its *Sartor Resartus*.

With this we seem to have exhausted all the possibilities of purely theoretic rationality. But we saw at the outset that when subjectively considered rationality can only be defined as perfectly unimpeded mental function. Impediments which arise in the purely theoretic sphere might perhaps be avoided if the stream of mental action should leave

thing. . . . To minds of sanguine imagination there will be a sadness in the tenor of the mystery, as if the key-note of the universe were low—for no poetry, no emotion known to the normal sanity of man, can furnish a hint of its primæval prestige, and its all-but appalling solemnity; but for such as have felt sadly the instability of temporal things there is a comfort of serenity and ancient peace; while for the resolved and imperious spirit there are majesty and supremacy unspeakable." The logical characteristic of this state is said to be "an apodal sufficiency—to which sufficiency a wonder or fear of why it is sufficient cannot pertain and could be attributed only as an impossible disease or lack. . . . The disease of Metaphysics vanishes in the fading of the question and not in the coming of an answer."

that sphere betimes and pass into the practical. The structural unit of mind is in these days, deemed to be a triad, beginning with a sensible impression, ending with a motion, and having a feeling of greater or less length in the middle. Perhaps the whole difficulty of attaining theoretic rationality is due to the fact that the very quest violates the nature of our intelligence, and that a passage of the mental function into the third stage before the second has come to an end in the *cul de sac* of its contemplation, would revive the energy of motion and keep alive the sense of ease and freedom which is its psychic counterpart. We must therefore inquire what constitutes the feeling of rationality in its *practical* aspect; but that must be done at another time and in another place.

NOTE.—This article is the first chapter of a psychological work on the motives which lead men to philosophise. It deals with the purely theoretic or logical impulse. Other chapters treat of practical and emotional motives and in the conclusion an attempt is made to use the motives as tests of the soundness of different philosophies.

XI
CLIFFORD'S "LECTURES AND
ESSAYS" ¹

[1879]

It is impossible to read these volumes without taking an even greater interest in the human character they reveal than in the matters of which they treat. The author was cut down last March at the age of thirty-three. Many who have read hastily and at long intervals the essays here gathered together may have caught the impression of a genius too iconoclastic to be sympathetic, too fond of paradoxical statement to be wise, too eager for battle to be fair; but the massive effect of all the essays taken together and combined with the personal account of Clifford in the introduction strongly modifies this feeling. We see a man profuse of gifts of body and mind, of "boundless human interests and sympathies," so intensely social that "personal enmity was to him a thing impossible"; of a genius in mathematics so original that we have heard an

[¹ Review of *Lectures and Essays*, and *Seeing and Thinking*, by W. K. Clifford, London and New York, 1879. Reprinted from *Nation*, 1879, 29, 312-313. Clifford's views on "The Ethics of Belief" most perfectly embodied that vigorous positivism to which James opposed his "Will-to-Believe" doctrine. See references to Clifford in *Will to Believe* (1897) *passim*. Ed.]

authority than whom none could be more competent say that he might have rivalled the fame of Newton had he lived; but, on the other hand, endowed with that sense for the color and human expression of things which poets have and mathematicians too often lack, and which irradiates every page he writes with humor and fancy; of insatiable curiosity, but as eager to give all he gained as to receive it; possessed of such reckless animal spirits that we find him now hanging by his toes on the crossbars of a church-steeple weather-cock, now performing the almost incredible feat of writing his articles on the "Unseen Universe" and on Virchow's address each in a single night—we see all this, and we feel that, as Mr. Pollock says, his printed work must be a very slender representative of all he was to those who knew him, and that the incommunicable and indescribable thing called genius, *das Dämonische*, when it exists in a man as it did in him, transcends all his specific performances, and, "lightening the air his friends breathe," may very well justify them in making claims which to the distant reader sound exorbitant.

But even the distant reader must allow that Clifford's mental personality belonged to the highest possible *type*, to say no more. The union of the mathematician with the poet, fervor with measure, passion with correctness, this surely is the ideal. And if in these modern days we are to look for any prophet or saviour who shall influence our feelings towards the universe as the founders and re-

newers of past religions have influenced the minds of our fathers, that prophet, if he ever come, must, like Clifford, be no mere sentimental worshipper of science, but an expert in her ways. And he must have what Clifford had in so extraordinary a degree—that lavishly generous confidence in the worthiness of average human nature to be told all truth, the lack of which in Goethe made him an inspiration to the few but a cold riddle to the many.

But why, with all of Clifford's powers, does the result appear so small? Why do these lectures seem to the reader almost funny in the inadequacy with which they shadow forth anything fit to form a "creed" for modern life? Why, indeed, to put the case more broadly, would an almost impossible cumulation of faculties in a single man—Clifford's scientific faith and skill, a poetic craft equal to his poetic feeling, a faculty for public affairs which he never possessed, a genius for familiar oratory, an expansive communicativeness, and a humanity greater than his—why would all these aptitudes together certainly fail *now* to give their possessor that altogether incalculable sort of power over the mind of his generation which the prophets of the past have held? The answer to these questions is short enough. Our modern mind is nothing if not critical—the craving for consistency has entered into its soul, and nothing will deeply move it but a synthesis of things which is radically reasoned out. No array of separate gifts, with this synthesis still unachieved, will make a prophet now. Ever some

vital factor of our mental life will rebel and refuse to be dragged the same way with the rest. The miraculous achievement, the achievement upon which we are all waiting for our faculties to burst into movement like mill-wheels at the touch of a torrent, must be a metaphysical achievement, the greatest of all time—the demonstration, namely, that all our different motives, rightly interpreted, pull one way. Now our Science tells our Faith that she is shameful, and our Hopes that they are dupes; our Reverence for truth leads to conclusions that make all reverence a falsehood; our new Good, survival of our tribe, is the one thing certain to perish with our planet; our Freedom annuls our opportunities for lofty deeds; our Equality with our brethren quenches all tendency to be proud of their brotherhood; our Art, instead of intimating divine secrets, becomes an intellectual sensuality, revealing no secrets but those of our nervous systems; our craving for personal recognition at the heart of things is flatly contradicted by our persuasion that we none of us possess any independent personality at all; in short, if we wish to keep in action, we have no resource but to clutch some one thing out of the chaos to serve as our hobby, and trust to our native blindness and mere animal spirits to make us indifferent to the loss of all the rest. Can the synthesis and reconciliation come? It would be as rash to despair of it as to swear to it in advance. But when it does come, whatever its specific character may be, it will necessarily have to be of the theoretic order,

a result of deeper philosophic analysis and discrimination than has yet been made. He who makes it will indeed be a leader of his time; for then, in our author's words, will there be a "universe fresh born, a new heaven, a new earth, a new elysium open to our eager feet." Then, indeed, will *la vérité* be *toute pour tous*, in the phrase which the editors have placed as an epigraph on the title-page of these lectures. Then we can all re-echo with Clifford:

"If a thing is true, let us all believe it, rich and poor, men, women, and children. If a thing is untrue, let us all disbelieve it, rich and poor, men, women, and children. Truth is a thing to be shouted from the house-tops, not to be whispered over rose-water after dinner, when the ladies are gone away. . . ."

But what sort of a figure does Clifford's own philosophy make when treated in this fashion? Surely there never was an intenser illustration than is spread out in these pages of the chaotic state of our contemporary thinking, or a creed on the whole less fit to be proclaimed to the people as the matured and clarified result of scientific thought. There are, of course, exquisitely simple and vivid statements of particular physical theories. It is hard to imagine better reading to inflame a boy with thirst for physics than the lecture on "Atoms," and the articles entitled "The Unseen Universe" and "The First and Last Catastrophe." The one on "Boundaries" in the smaller volume is marvellously clear; and the chapters on the "Philosophy of the Pure Sciences" in the larger form as luminous an in-

roduction to mathematical philosophy as was ever written. Image after image of perfect felicity pursue each other through a style of which the only fault is too great ease and too many Saxon words for our degenerate ears. But in the fundamental ideas what mere subjective capriciousness! A scepticism which fears to call the axioms of geometry true, but which takes no umbrage at the self-contradictions of continuity and infinite division in space and time; a scrupulousness which speaks with all the unction of the theological vocabulary of the "guilt" and "sin" of believing even the truth before it has been scientifically demonstrated, but which fears not to lay down as dogmas, to be believed by all, such pure conceptions of the possible as the existence of primordial atoms of "mind-stuff" which are the true things *in se*, the impotence of feeling to influence action, and the rigorous fatality of human acts. Then as to Ethics: Clifford's great discovery is that what is objectively *good*, as distinguished from what is merely subjectively pleasant, is what conduces to the survival of the tribe. Loyalty to truth and all other virtues draw their nobility from being means to this effect. And the symbolic figure of the tribe is invoked as a substitute for superhuman deities, "a grander and nobler figure" than theirs, the figure of "Him who made all gods and shall unmake them":

"A presence in which one's own poor personality is shrivelled into nothingness, . . . which in moments of utter sincerity, when a man has bared his own soul be-

fore the immensities and the eternities, arises within him and says, as plainly as words can say, 'I am with thee, and I am greater than thou.' Many names of gods, of many shapes, have men given to this presence; seeking by names and pictures to know more clearly and to remember more continually the guide and the helper of men. No such comradeship with the great Companion shall have anything but reverence from me. . . . From the dim dawn of history, and from the inmost depth of every soul, the face of our father Man looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says: 'Before Jehovah was, I am!'

Surely splendid rhetoric; but observe the circle in the logic: "We must show piety to our race because our race is worthy" means, simply stated, that we must help it to survive because it *can* survive. But if it can survive, it will anyhow, and needs none of our help. Whilst, if it needs our help, it can't survive *per se*, and lacking, therefore, those attributes which we learn to call objectively good, can have no claim on our sympathy. In any case we may turn our backs upon it. It is beside the mark to say, "As a matter of fact we can't turn our backs; instinct forbids." Other instincts *bid*; and the whole use of open-eyed philosophy is to teach us how we ought to decide when our blind instincts clash. Professor Clifford's fine organ-music, like the bands and torches of our political campaigns, must be meant for our nerves rather than for our reason. The entire modern deification of survival *per se*, survival returning into itself, survival naked and abstract, with the denial of any substantive ex-

cellence in *what* survives, except the capacity for more survival still, is surely the strangest intellectual stopping-place ever proposed by one man to another.

Take, again, Clifford's notion that high action means *free* action. Seating himself firmly on this high horse, he immediately proceeds with the utmost fury to chop off its legs. For he first defines free action as action from within, and then describes action from within as that whose immediate antecedents are molecular, and not the massive motions of distant bodies. Think of firing the popular heart for virtue by promulgating, as the only true and scientifically warranted moral law, the formula: "So act that all thy deeds have molecular, not massive, antecedents"!

Clifford's great metaphysical theory of units of mind-stuff forming things in themselves, and appearing to each other as molecules of matter, so far from clearing up our ideas makes confusion worse confounded for the present. It would really require a fourth or a fifth dimension of space to make an intelligible diagram of the relations between the thing, the thought of the thing, and the brain process subserving the thought, which this theory necessitates. But, as the author himself says, "the question is one in which it is peculiarly difficult to make out precisely what another man means, and even what one means one's self." Only we think a clearer grasp of this theory might have dispossessed from Clifford's mind that other theory, that